THE CRESSET

DECEMBER 1947

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE,
THE ARTS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

- Year's End
- A Christmas Letter
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- Bach's Mass in B Minor

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THIRTY CENTS
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Is There Any Excuse?

It is always easy to find excuses for giving way to the promptings of our sinful flesh. Take the case of the need in Europe. To salve our conscience for not helping, we can say: The people of the former enemy countries brought this distress on themselves; or, They have not done all they could have done to help themselves; or, They won’t thank us for what we do because they think we are all fabulously rich; or, I am having a hard time getting along myself.

But even if all of the first three excuses were true to the facts, what would they amount to in the face of Matt. 5:44-45? A Christian does his works of love as unto Christ, who promised that even a cup of cold water given in His name shall not fail of its reward.

And if one has a difficult time oneself in making ends meet in these days of inflation: what a chance to taste the unselfish joys that wait on self-denial and self-sacrifice in the name of Him who became man at Christmastide, holding His own life cheap in order to meet our need, and who bade us follow His example!

Come, Lord Jesus

The pitiful need of the starving masses in Europe is being brought home to the hearts and consciences of Americans more and more insistently. Millions of despairing men, women, and children look to us as their only hope. They stretch out their hands to us, not asking that we give them the means to live in ease and com-
fort, but imploring us only for enough to enable them to eke out a bare existence in the midst of hunger and cold and every form of privation. The official rations in several of the zones of Germany are so scanty that those who can find no way to augment them from other sources must inevitably perish, either by wasting away ("drying up," as they call it), by hunger edemas, or by one of the many diseases which carry off those who have no resistance.

How are we Christians answering that urgent appeal to our love? We have the custom of inviting Jesus to be our guest when we sit down to eat. Now Jesus taught us to regard every needy fellow-man as if he were our Lord in person. If, then, we mean what we say, we are inviting the hungry of other lands to partake of what we have whenever we speak that prayer. Do we mean it? Do we let them partake?

After All!

A mericans are notorious for their inability to make even the most basic of distinctions in art, in religion, and in politics.

Considering many of its products, we had always suspected that Hollywood was especially afflicted with this inability. The recent investigation of Communism in Hollywood confirmed our suspicions.

A prominent lady was on the stand to testify to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Among other things, she reported that a certain actress had refused to appear in a certain motion picture because in it neighbors were exhorted "to share and share alike"—an opinion she regarded as Red propaganda.

Another film was denounced because in it the village banker was the villain, apparently an indication that the writer was out to wreck the capitalistic system. When someone suggested once that the Constitution, being a century and a half old, was out of date and needed revision (a sentiment cherished by the late Justice Holmes) this, too, was dangerous. Pacifism was also denounced as pro-Russian.

One does not have to be a Communist sympathizer to feel that such an investigation crosses the border of the ridiculous into the dangerous. After all, there are limits!

Narkombozh

T wo years have passed since the election of Metropolitan Alexei to the throne of Patriarch of Moscow. During that time he has carried on his work under the
direction of the Soviet State Council on Church Affairs, known popularly among the Russian people as “Narkombozh”—the Commissariat of God.

We cannot help wondering what thoughts must enter the mind of this scholar and churchman as he reviews the two years of his work. They have been years of privation for his people, years of doubt and fear for his Church.

Sure it is that his very presence in Moscow is proof of the fact that despite official persecution and blasphemy, the Christian faith has not died in Russia. As has been pointed out in several recent studies, the election of Sergei to the patriarchate in September, 1943, was an admission of defeat on the part of the Soviet government.

Just as surely, however, the Patriarch must be aware of the precarious position he occupies and the great price he has had to pay for that position—the price of silencing his Christian witness in the face of the Secret Police, the price of being used as a political tool by the enemies of the Church.

No, God is by no means a commissar in Soviet Russia. But at least Alexei may comfort himself with the thought that the other commissars still find it impossible to manage their regime without some reference even to God.

When the World Is Wrong

Twice within the memory of many of us, America has been forced to go to war against her enemies and the enemies of democracy in order to save and guarantee her way of life.

Both times, after some hesitation and with some exceptions, leaders and representatives of the Christian Church have given their support to American participation as the only possible means for saving civilization. We still feel that they were probably right in doing so.

But in the face of the present war hysteria, we Christians ought very seriously to review our thinking on the problem of war, so that if another war should come, we may respond to it in a Christian way.

In such a time as this, the Church dare not trim her sails. She dare not “present arms” merely because that is the command. It may well be that many Christians will be forced by their Christian conscience to refuse support to a conflict in which both sides seem to them to be guilty.

Regardless of what happens, we pray God that the dictum of a prominent American churchman may be fulfilled:

“The Church is right when the world is right. The Church is right when the world is wrong.”
For Better or For Worse . . .

Across the hall from the apartment where Minnie and I live, live the Squinches, Mr. and Mrs. The other evening I was alone, it was hot and quiet, and the doors were open. I couldn’t help hearing what was said across the hall, to-wit:

... and I guess you wish I was dead, but you’d be sorry even if you married that Hobble woman, the freak, and you don’t care if I never get out of the house after I work my fingers to the bone for you all day, all my friends are sorry for me being such a slave and if I’d known that I’d have married that nice plumber-man that used to make eyes at me, all plumbers are rich and sweet to their wives, I hope you don’t cry when I die, it would be hibbercritical, and you can put that black dress with the little white dots on me and see that Barko gets to the veterinarian doctor for his fleas and don’t spend any of your precious money for a wreath for me, and ... 

Then I heard Mr. Squinch say, “Well, then let’s go to the movies.” And peace flapped its noiseless wings until the Squinches, five minutes later, came out of their door together, a picture of matrimonial concord.

Superman for Profit

Parents quite generally realize that it is important that their children be given intellectual training, but many do not understand that it is fully as important that they receive proper emotional training. Emotional maladjustments in childhood and youth are liable to bear fruit in later life in the form of nervous and mental disorders, ranging from the milder quirks and oddities all the way to insanity.

Whatever causes an undue strain on a child’s nervous system will, therefore, be avoided, if possible, by a wise parent. Yet how many parents permit their children to expose themselves day after day to radio programs and movies which keep them at high nervous tension for extended periods of time! If this happens shortly before or after meals, it constitutes an invitation to digestive trouble.

At any time, the practice is likely to lead to irritability, nervousness, and worse. Should anyone ask why, then, such entertainment is offered for children, the answer is that those who provide commercial amusement are in the field for their own profit and not for the welfare of others. Protection of their children is up to the parents.

Year’s End

The year 1947 is ending as it began. In New York small men were still grappling with
great problems. Europe is hungry, Palestine is boiling, England is at dusk, and our own country is bewildered and tense. No one will ever say that 1947 was a good year.

Behind all our troubles as December, 1947, came, was the effort to solve the problems of the new age by methods which were not too successful in 1800. We were still trying to cure our moral and social pneumonia with tablets that were not very effective against colds. Another organization, a few meetings, the jockeying of power politics, backyard diplomacy—these were still the techniques by which we were attempting to save a world unbelievably, mortally, sick.

So 1947 was not a good year. Only the radical meaning of the coming of the Christchild held any hope. It would also have to be our only hope for 1948. There was divine purpose in 1947, of course. Perhaps it was to compel men to look again at the Manger. If it was, it may finally have been a good year, but only our children and children’s children will know it.

**Preface to Doom**

The scientist, Dr. Ernest G. Andrews of the California Institute of Technology, had some misshapen sickly ears of corn in his hands. To a fascinated group of his colleagues he pointed out that they came from seeds which had been exposed to radio-activity in the Bikini bomb tests. “Affected genes and chromosomes in some Japanese people,” he said, “may result in the birth of morons, cripples and deformed progeny in future generations.”

We have often felt that the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki constituted one of the most tragically immoral acts in all history. The fateful prospect of its effect upon generations yet unborn confirms us in this conclusion.

There is the dim, distant tolling of doom in the misshapen ears of corn. The next war will probably be short. Some atomic bombs, millions dead, other millions wandering crazed over the ruins—and it will be all over. But in the air, in the earth, in the bodies of the survivors will be the seeds of decay and destruction. The rottenness of our moral world will become the rottenness of our physical environment. Perhaps Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the preface to doom, the first tolling of the final bell.

**Murder in the Bubble-Gum Set**

The boy stood sobbing quietly before Chief Justice Harrington in the Criminal Court of Chicago. It was the racking crying of
complete hopelessness. He was standing there at the age of twelve (I remember another boy of twelve standing in another place nineteen hundred years ago) because he had confessed to the brutal murder of a nine year old playmate. He had stabbed his friend, cut his throat, and smashed his head with a slab of cement.

His mother stood beside him wearing slacks and babushka. She admitted that there was nothing in her home which might prevent murder in the Thatcher woods on a Saturday afternoon. Finally the judge asked: “Where is your husband?” “I have no idea,” she replied. Her attorney spoke up: “He has been missing since 1936.”

There, in two sentences, is a better summary of our juvenile delinquency problem than all the sermons and addresses I have ever heard. The problem of America is the older generation, careless, amoral, drinking, shoddy, sloppily married, irresponsible. The advanced thinkers who taught them to be like that should be standing in that court—charged with murder.

P.S. The title of this note is the invention of a Chicago reporter. Perhaps it means something, too.

**Room for All**

From our days in the American Fur and Leather Workers’ Union of the C.I.O., we recall a story which has acquired new meaning.

A Marxist haranguer was denouncing the American economic system with all the vehemence of a revival preacher. “In Russia, all men have equal opportunity; that’s not true under this blankety-blank capitalistic system. In Russia, they don’t have to worry about the stock market, but Wall Street runs this blankety-blank capitalistic system.” And so on, *usque ad nauseam*.

Finally, someone asked the inevitable: “Then why don’t you go to Russia?” Without even pausing to scratch his three-day growth of beard, the haranguer replied: “Because I like this blankety-blank capitalistic system!”

Precisely! And like it he should, for it is combined in America with a political system which permits, nay, encourages criticism.

There is therefore no need for any American to adopt the Marxist creed or platform; any American who does—whatever else he may be—is incredibly stupid. For in the American way of life there is room for all to express their judgments.

So what’s the point in turning Communist?
A Christmas Letter

Dear Son:

It was almost midnight last night when I drove home from Chicago. . . . A cold November rain beat against the windshield, and a bitter wind wailed across the prairies. . . . Suddenly, just where the road turns away from the lake, I noticed snowflakes mingled with the rain. . . . Winter had come. . . . It was time to write you another letter about Christmas.

As I drove the rest of the way, the fields turned white with that still whiteness which is the charm of our northern winters. . . . These nights, these long and quiet winter nights, are made for silence, the sweet and mortal memory of other days when the way ahead was much longer than it is now and the going by of the years was broken into the happy march of days free of care and unburdened by fear. . . . Suddenly I remembered too that it would probably be about 1960 before you would read one of these letters written in the middle of the lonely and trembling forties. . . . I slowed the car down and tried to think of all the things that I would like to have you know and remember in 1960 . . . the things you will need then as we need them now when all our hearts, except yours and your friends', are so far away from Christmas. . . .

Perhaps, I thought, we ought to begin with the little things. . . . The things of the earth. . . . I hope you will be in a place where you can watch the seasons come and go, the wonder of spring, the turning leaf, the galleries of the stars, the joy of summer, the frozen grief of winter. . . . You will need the awareness of these things as a constant balance against what men do in the innocent earth and the unheeding years. . . . You will find it, I hope, a strange and comforting contrast. . . . And you will, I fear, need that in 1960 even more than we do in 1947. . . .
I hope, too, that you will have other things. . . . The light from the windows of home on autumn nights, a few books, a fire, music now and then, good friends who can make life vocal as the hours turn toward morning. . . . And always, from the far shore beyond the years, the sound of singing, fainter now than ever in 1947 but perhaps stronger again in 1960 . . . the songs of the eternal city sounding through the long way and the dark gate . . . certainly for me if I can stay with you that long, and just as certainly, I hope, for you. . . .

And that brings me to Christmas. . . . My trip to Chicago was to attend a meeting in which we talked about the problem of the Church. . . . The problems were great and we talked, not too wisely, about education and missions and plans and programs and surveys. . . . I should confess to you that I have been doing that for a long time now and that I am very tired of it. . . . Perhaps by 1960 you will know that there were two things wrong with what we did in 1947: first, we talked much too long and did not act enough; and secondly, we talked only about abstractions. . . . We were little, bewildered, anxious people and we thought we could do something about the world’s darkness by talking about the light instead of being it, living it, and loving it with every beat of our hurting hearts. . . .

Surely, one reason for that was that we had forgotten Christmas. . . . By 1960 you ought to know consciously, as you now know with the given faith of childhood, that there are no abstractions in Bethlehem. . . . There is even hardly any talking except the angels speaking so kindly to the shepherds, and the shepherds saying: “Let us now go.” . . . There is some singing, as there should be, and at the end of the story a “Thank you” to God. . . . But otherwise it is all action . . . real and good . . . human beings acting under the imperatives of heaven . . . and in the center the quiet Baby who was God. . . . Today in 1947 you would not be interested in my telling you about our meeting yesterday, but I notice that you listen quietly when I tell you about the Baby, the Mother, the shepherds, the singing angels and the dancing stars. . . . That is one of the differences between Christmas and 1947—and a deep and sad one it is. . . . And so you and I must try very hard to make Christmas a burning and shining in the heart that all may see it, living it, learning to make our whole life an expression and fulfillment, a channel and a way for the Child so that men may look into our hearts and see His glory there, the glory of the only-be-
gotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

I know that you do not understand this part of it now. . . . The way we say it is not nearly so good and beautiful as it really is. . . . Sometimes, when I sit in my chair in the corner of the room and you are running around the house, I can see that almost everything in the house is too big and too high for you. . . . You cannot reach the top of the table, you must climb up into chairs, and some of the books are too heavy for you to hold. . . . That is because the house and everything in it, except your toys and your bed, were made for grown-ups. . . . That is the way our whole world is built too. . . . When we grownups do something, we seldom think of what it is going to mean to you who will be growing up only in 1960. . . . We start wars and forget that little boys all over the world will die of bombs and hunger, their crying like a tearing pain in the heart of the Child. . . . We hate and fear and kill and build that kind of world for you. . . . These are big things to us, the kind we like to make, and you should never accept them as part of your life. . . . But at Bethlehem nothing is really too big. . . . You can stand at the low manger and look right at the Baby, the sheep is about as tall as you are and the ox would look at you with kind and friendly eyes. . . . Even the door by which we enter is easier for you than for me. . . . I have to stoop very low because the stable was not arranged by God for people who hold their heads high and are too proud to bend before the mystery of the Child. . . . If I want to see the Child as I should, I shall have to kneel down. . . . But you can stand up. . . . Things are really very different there, so different from our house and our world. . . . Everything is made for children, the little children of all ages and all nations who are great enough, by the pity of God, to become small enough to reach up to the Manger. . . . In 1960 or 1980, my son, my son, I would be happy, here or there, to see you in that blessed company.

There are many other strange things about Christmas. . . . In the Ozark Mountains, as in other places where men live close to the good earth, there is an old legend that at midnight on Christmas Eve the cattle kneel in adoration of the Savior who came into their stable so many years ago. . . . A part of the legend, however, is that they will not kneel if any human being is watching. . . . That of course makes the story safe from prying, scientific eyes. . . . We shall never be able to prove or disprove it by the evidence of our senses. . . . And that is the way all
of Christmas is, an intimate, ultimate thing which is forever beyond the eyes of our proud minds. ... Only the cattle know if they really kneel to the Savior at midnight in the hills; and only we ourselves, in our own hidden hearts, can know when we are at the Manger. ... In fact, you have to give your heart away before you know, deep down as you know nothing else, that the love that warmed the world that first holy night will never forsake you again ... that it is forever beyond the sight of faithless eyes and the power of unholy hands. ...

When you read this I should like to have you remember how Christmas was at our house in 1947 ... There were the lights which began on the first Sunday in Advent, one the first week, two the second, and so on until all five burned quietly on Christmas Eve before the lights on the tree shone brightly in the room ... the students who sang carols every night, sometimes long after you were in bed ... the Christmas music for all the boys and girls we could crowd into the house ... the chimes from the campus and the church ... the vespers in the college chapel ... and through it all, the nights cold with frost and warm with music, the slow journey of the heart, hardly knowing the way, beyond the last white star to the heaven of the Manger. ... It was a lovely time each year and for a little while we forgot the black headlines and the confused voices of the radio ... as I hope you will be able to forget them in 1960. ...

Sometimes, these winter nights, I try to imagine what the world will be like when you read this letter. ... I find it very hard. ... In 1947 we are still in the roaring ebb-tide of a great war, careless, selfish, forgetful of the waiting of God and the pain of men. ... A few years ago, as we were leaving chapel, one of our girls gave me a poem by Marcia Masters entitled "A Prayer for Christmas." She had saved it because her husband lies buried on an island in the South Pacific. ... In a few lines it tells the whole story of our world in 1947, focussed in a seeing moment on a single grave:

Oh, this is the prayer that I wish to make—
For a grave in the jungleland,
Where a soldier sleeps who tried to bless
The world with his dying hand.
For the holly hangs on our native hearth,
And the Christmas trees are bright,
But the peace we seek lies side by side
Down in the jungle night,
Where the yellow man and the white man sleep
In a brotherhood denied
December 1947

Till their graves were dug and they came to rest
Like brothers side by side.

Now the bells ring out and logs burn bright,
But I think of the jungle sun
Where the man we love and the man we hate
In the simple earth are one;
And the moon is laid like an altar cloth
Over a tropic land,
Where a soldier sleeps who tried to bless
All men with his dying hand.

I cannot know whether you will be any closer to peace on earth in 1960. . . . Even then when Christmas comes you will have to guard against measuring heaven by the standards of earth. . . . Peace, even among nations, is not a matter of treaties and guns and atomic bombs. . . . It is a matter of the heart resting in quiet at the manger. . . . There can be no peace in the hearts of nations unless there is peace in the hearts of men, because no nation can be greater than the men and women who make it. . . . And so the grave in the Pacific and the tears of the world from sunrise to sunset are the measure of our distance from Bethlehem . . . . They will not end until they end there. . . .

When you read this, you ought to remember that despite what I have just written our Christmas in 1947 was a very happy one. . . . Happy because the Child gave us the power to see its meaning . . . Because in spite of sin and suffering the world is lovely, for He came to live with us and His feet have trodden the earth . . . because in our hearts winter is now past, the rain is over and gone, and the flowers have appeared in the land . . . because the manger is not an end but a beginning . . . the beginning of Christmas here always until the end when the day breaks and the shadows retire . . . because He, the Child and Holy One, can wipe all tears from our eyes . . . even with hands smaller than yours. . . .

Perhaps someone else will read this before you do. . . . I am sure you will want to join me in asking God for a very happy Christmas for them . . . in praying that He would take them in from the cold and give them at the manger everything they have ever lost and everything they can ever gain. . . .
The Christmas Garland

The editors consider Christmas 1947...

The Babe of Bethlehem

What's all this talk about the babe of Bethlehem? Have you met her?” said a student from . . . University a few years ago to a daughter of mine enrolled in the same class. She discovered that the young man was actually more stupid than snobbish.

A hundred years ago Positivism achieved its greatest successes. It was fashionable to slobber over Christmas and all the sacred intangibles that go with it. It was the age of the Spencers and Renans, the Darwins and Huxleys, the Marxes and Engels. The French evasion, "Je crois, mais ne pratique pas," was easily Anglicized and Americanized into, “Of course, my good fellow, I'm not so out of date as to believe, but naturally I keep Christmas.” Similarly today there are those who jettison Christ but trim the Christmas tree, who deny the Man of Sorrows but are sweetly pretty about the Babe of Bethlehem.

“Christmasse comes but once a year,” says the Roman proverb quoted by Camden in 1605. With Christmas comes a challenge. A challenge in particular to every pen, pencil, typewriter, dictaphone, and mike. Christmas cards by the millions, most of them artistically designed and beautifully engraved, but lamentably weak in sentiment make life an ordeal for the trudging mail-carrier. Christmas parties feature Christmas chiefly, as a wit put it, in honor of the "man called Sandy Claws, not a white man, you know, but a kind o' Chinaman.” And in many a Christmas Eve program for children adoration of the Babe of Bethlehem is woefully absent. The following description of a Rally Sunday by Mar-
gueritte Harmon Bro applies equally well to many a Christmas Eve program:

First thing we see, after the minister has beamingly announced the changes in program, is the infant class being herded onto the platform. One teacher sits at the piano firmly playing a repetitious tune and a second teacher audibly coaches from the sidelines, while twenty-three children lisp a song whose words do not matter, however saccharine, because the audience is titteringly absorbed in watching the third child from the left try to tie his shoe. The children are just so darling in their embarrassment or exhibitionism that we do not think of the experience they themselves are having.

For millions the “babe of Bethlehem” might as well be a babe in toyland or Madame Butterfly.

Yet for those twice born, Christmas comes with the challenge to hear out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Hosannas to our Lord and King, a challenge once more to contemplate, to marvel, and to confess and believe with Robert Southwell:

Despise him not for lying there,  
First, what he is inquire;  
An orient pearl is often found  
In depth of dirty mire.

Weigh not his crib, his wooden dish,  
Nor beasts that by him feed;  
Weigh not his Mother's poor attire,  
Nor Joseph's simple weed.

This stable is a Prince's court,  
This crib his chair of state;  
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,  
The wooden dish his plate.

The persons in that poor attire  
His royal liveries wear;  
The Prince himself is come from heaven;  
This pomp is prized there.

With joy approach, O Christian wight,  
Do homage to thy King;  
And highly praise his humble pomp,  
Which he from heaven doth bring.

The Way of the King

No king ever came as Christ came. No kingdom was ever built as He built His. The trappings of royalty were obscured by the crudeness of the manger in which He lay and by the humble plainness of the royal mother who gave Him birth. No guards in threatening armor attended Him as He made His way through the cities and villages of Palestine, but twelve young men without sophistication or wealth or social position went with Him as He laid the foundation of His everlasting Kingdom in the deep places of the human heart. No heralds with strident trumpets announced His approach to the cities, but all the angels of heaven sang for joy when, unnoticed on
earth, the gates of a human heart swung quietly open to let Him in. More remarkable still—the day of His coronation was the day of His death and only a thief dying for his crimes seemed to have faith and vision enough to see through all the blackness of Calvary the splendor of the King who remembered men with forgiveness and with Paradise. And the way of the coming of the King is the way of salvation for our tormented generation. It is the way of the meekness and of the omnipotent love of the King. It scorns the means which men use to achieve greatness and might and finds in its loving relationship to the King the wisdom and the strength which can save mankind. All the candles of Christmas glow with the knowledge of the glory of God which shines in the face of Christ our King. They illumine the way out of the dark for our generation.

**Fear Not**

These were the first words which the startled shepherds on the plains near Bethlehem heard when the angelic messenger appeared to them on that memorable first Christmas night. The reaction of the shepherds is a common experience of man since the day when Adam hid himself from the presence of God in Eden. The consciousness of man's guilt gives him reason to fear that any message from heaven is an announcement of God's wrath.

We are living in times when fear has gripped the hearts of men perhaps as never before. At home economic and social problems seem to defy all efforts toward their solution and are becoming more acute. On the international horizon the clouds are growing darker. The press and the radio sound alarming notes which cause men to ask, "What of tomorrow?" Just now at this moment a radio broadcast describes the plans for the construction of an atom bomb shelter under a skyscraper in one of our larger cities. The very thought of a possible third World War tends to drive men frantic. People are brought to the verge of despair when they hear that Einstein in response to the question, what weapons would be used in a third World War, replied that he did not know, but he did know that in a fourth World War men would fight with stones and clubs and spears.

To this fear-stricken world of ours Christmas is again approaching. In the sweetest story ever told we shall again hear the message of the angel, "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." If the true significance of
this wonderful Christmas message is grasped by faith, then fear must give way to joy and hope. Assured of God’s unfathomable love toward him, the Christian knows that he is secure, that God is his mighty fortress. This assurance causes him to face the future courageously and hopefully. He knows that as a child of God he has a mission in life, especially when he sees God’s sun of grace sinking toward the horizon and the shadows lengthening upon a sin-steeped world. Therefore when the message of Christmas in this year of 1947 strikes our hearts, let us banish fear and join in the chorus:

O joy, beyond all gladness,
Christ has done away with sadness!
Hence, all sorrow and repining,
For the Sun of Grace is shining.

"That Than Which . . ."

BY A HAPPY coincidence, Christmas comes each year at about the same time that my students are being initiated into the mysteries of the ontological proof for the existence of God as propounded by Anselm of Canterbury. It is based upon his analysis of “that than which nothing greater can be imagined.”

And each year Christmas comes to demonstrate the weakness and the futility of such analysis. Not as “that than which nothing greater can be imagined,” but weak and humble and ever so small, God descends the ladder from heaven to Bethlehem with a baby in His arms. When the human mind has done everything it can to analyze Him, He comes in human form and discloses the fatherly heart of God.

There are probably few men who understand Anselm’s argumentation completely, fewer still who accept it. But the Gift of Christmas is the Child whom no one understands but many thankful hearts accept, as God by-passes the arm-chair of the philosopher and the catheder of the professor to be born in a manger.

It is good that Christmas should come again, that my students may know—and their prof be reminded—that He was not born to be proved or disproved, speculated over or philosophized about, but to be worshipped and adored as that which cannot be imagined, but must be believed and trusted.

Alley Fire

When December comes to Bissell Street, there is a new smell in the air. The old smells still go on—wood smoke, the tannery across the river, the pickling works, the clinging smell of refuse burning somewhere—but this one
smell is new—custom made for December and the dirty snow. It is the smell of the little twigs of balsam and spruce that have fallen from the great trucks as they come into the city and lumber down toward the market. Back on the end of Smeary's lot, they are added to the after-school fire of the seven boys who have occupied that place at the intersection of the alleys and have held it for more than four months against all comers. In the history of both Blackhawk and Bissell Streets this is an all-time record. Smeary, who runs the grocery store (which in a country town would have been called a “General Store” because he has everything in stock), is proud that the boys are there—“Poor kids, they ain’t got no yards of their own and every kid should have a chance to play.” The broken boxes are excellent kindling and the fire blazes every day at twilight until the high-pitched shouts (pitched high because city mothers know what sounds will carry over the din of traffic) are trumpet calls to hasty washings, supper, and “Pa’s coming home.”

This fourteenth of December was a bad day—a Saturday, a dangerous day. If you weren’t careful you could easily be involved in chores such as baby minding, scrubbing, sweeping, dish-washing, etc. The result was an earlier gathering than usual at Smeary’s. The snow had begun coming down very gently right after lunch and even the alleys looked pretty with the white covers on all the ash cans. A strange quiet hung over the group as they shoved box boards and corrugated paper into the fire. Tom was not here. Everyone knew why—no one dared to say it. The perpetual warning—“Be careful”—had again been ignored by Tommy—as they all ignored it—and the wheels of the car had gone over his back as he slipped and fell. First they wanted to take him away, but when Mom saw the doctor’s eyes she said she wanted him home. They argued, but they took him up to the second floor rear over the paint and varnish store. They were very good to him. Special cast and everything he needed, but nothing worked. Everybody knew when death was coming close in the Alley and everyone became hushed as we all do in the face of such wonder. Tommy wasn’t going to see Christmas.

Quietly the twelve and thirteen year olds around the fire faced the fact. The smell of balsam was so real—Christmas would be here soon. What about Tommy? Everyone thought of the something and everyone said it at almost the same time—“We ain’t got no money.” Now it was out—everyone knew they wanted to do something for Tommy but it had to
be quick. Stella, the kid sister, had reported that everybody was up all night and Tommy wasn't talking at all today. Christmas would have to come quickly now for the boy.

Slowly Bob pushed around in the fire with the stick he had. "That's an awful nice hunk of wood you got"—"Yeah, it comes off that wrecked station wagon over at Charley's Garage"—"Hold it! Couldn't we make something out of a nice piece of wood like that? Maybe for Tommy even?"—Silence—John went and borrowed Smeary's little saw—the one that hardly cut at all—and no one said a word while he cut the stick into two uneven lengths and held them up in the form of a cross. A nod from all of them and out came his knife and where the sticks crossed he whittled away a hollow in each until they fitted together—at least fairly well—and then two nails from the apple box and a rock to hammer them in, and the little cross was finished. On the end where Bob had been prodding the fire the soot remained and the varnish showed faint blisters, but no one paid attention to that at all.

Proudly they shuffled through the snow. Mrs. Gallardi was glad they had thought of Tommy—No one could see him any more. Stella told them he was so happy—"He couldn't talk no more but Mom put it on the pillow and he kept turning his head to smell on the burnt part—just like he remembered the fire at Smeary's—he seems awful happy now and he wants the cross by him all the time. We gave him his presents for Christmas yesterday but he only wants the cross and the nice smell of the wood. I'll bet he'll love that more than all of them. You guys sure done the right thing."

The Unreasonableness of Christmas

The Christmas miracle is not a matter on which reason can shed any light. That a virgin conceived and brought forth a son, that God laid aside His power and glory to become a weak infant, subject to human sorrow and mortality, that this was necessary if mankind was not to be lost forever: before these truths reason stands helpless. Great is the mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh, and no effort of ours will ever plumb that mystery: we can only engrave the blessed facts in our memories and on our hearts and adore.

And yet in a measure we can understand why reason is here out of its depth. God brought the Christmas wonder to pass, not because of any rational considera-
tions but out of His immeasurable love for men. And love follows its own laws. It does not look to the plodding intellect for guidance; it does not weigh the worthiness of the loved one; it does not count the cost to itself. Love acts in the power of its own urgency, in disregard of all else, seeking only to fulfill itself, and thus it accomplishes, if need be, the seemingly impossible. It was so that God loved us when He sent His Son to share our lot.

Such love it is that should be reflected in our answering love to God and in our love to our needy fellowmen, whom He has appointed receivers of our love in His stead—a love that is not cool and calculating and niggardly but that pours itself out freely, lavishly, and, yes, unreasonably.

“Forgive Us Our Christmases”

This year, as for many years, the commercialization of Christmas has been startling in its extent. It has all but crowded out the real purpose and message of Christmas. The hustle and bustle of pre-Christmas shopping; the last-minute rush to buy a gift for someone who sent us an unexpected one; the addressing and mailing of stacks of Christmas greetings; the hurried preparations for Christmas dinners and parties; the wrapping of packages and getting them into the mail in time; the harried clerks in the stores; the over-burdened postmen and mail-clerks; all these make for tired bodies and frayed nerves. When Christmas dawns at last we are too worn out to enjoy it as we should and to give more than a passing thought to the true meaning of the Day and to a reconsecration of our hearts to Him whose Incarnation made possible our Redemption.

What is the remedy? We do not propose to suggest the abolition of any of our time-hallowed customs; but we do believe that the Christian should show his moderation also in their observance. Otherwise we shall be in real danger of losing for ourselves and for our children the true blessings of the Christmas festival.

Last year we read a story that showed how the rush of Christmas affected a little girl. The day before Christmas had been a hectic one. The mother of the household was nervously running from one task to the other, impatient of any interruptions by her little daughter. The father was harried by many little duties and had no time for his child. She was in everyone’s way, until at last she was hustled upstairs to bed. All
the hurry and excitement of the day had thoroughly unnerved her. When she knelt down by her bed to pray the Lord's Prayer, she was so confused, that she prayed: “Forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us.”

Jesus was born in lowly surroundings. The eternal and all-powerful Son of the eternal and all-powerful Father humbled Himself when He was made flesh and dwelt among us. Throughout His sojourn on earth Jesus proclaimed in season and out of season that man, conscious of a nature sinful to the very core, must be humble before God. “Everyone that exalteth himself,” He said, “shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

But Jesus did not teach that Christianity must be addicted to cringing humility as it pursues its course and performs its duties in this sin-laden world. The religion of Christ, with its ever present perspective of eternity, must assert itself without flinching.

Jesus preached a message of militancy. In righteous indignation He Himself made a scourge and drove the shameless money-changers from the Temple. “Think not,” He declared on one occasion, “that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” Jesus denounced the self-righteous Pharisees in words that are the most brilliant example of impassioned invective in all literature.

At Christmas time we think of our Savior as He humbled Himself for the purpose of delivering mankind from the curse of sin. We, too, must be humble; for without Him and His redemption we are doomed. We must be like the publican who went up to the Temple to pray and, in proper humility, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast and cried out of the depths of a contrite heart, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.”

Christianity does not abase itself. St. Paul was a humble disciple of his Savior when he stood before the self-satisfied Epicurean and Stoic philosophers on the Areopagus in Athens. At the same time he proclaimed the message of Jesus and the resurrection in all boldness.

Christianity must show aggressive courage as it faces a world torn with dissension and uncertainty. It can accomplish nothing whatever if it sheathes the sword which Christ put into its hand;
but it can, and will, achieve much if it wields that sword in accordance with the example of Jesus Himself. The world of today has urgent need of a militant and fearless Christianity—a Christianity which is determined to assert itself.

Waldensian Hymn to the Trinity
(Based on 13th century Provençal poem, “Lo Payre Eternal”)

EAGLE ever soaring higher, 
uphold this vagrant will of mine 
and rescue me from mortal mire.

LAMB of offering for my sin, 
of offering for my sin, 
both heaven and earth are realms of Thine and hell is conquered— 
Thou didst win.

DOVE without gall, with gracious eye 
descend on me with gifts divine 
that I God’s will exemplify.

   Eagle supernal, 
   Lamb sacrificial, 
   Dove sanctifying, 
   save me, 
   Trinity 
   keep me.

—MARTY MARTY
THE SNAKE HANDLERS

They are again making the front page. Legislatures have taken notice of the cult in several southern states and have prohibited the practice because of the peril to bystanders drawn by curiosity. As a result the practice has flourished mightily in Harlan County, Ky., where in its present form it originated. When a child lately recovered from a bite, the parents having repudiated all medical assistance, the wild-eyed hordes swarmed in from surrounding states for a service of triumph and jubilee.

What, from the standpoint of religion or science, are we to think of these snake handlers?

Historically, the present wave of defying the poison fangs of rattlers and copperheads as part of a religious ceremonial, arose some 30 years ago when K. D. Browning, a Pine Mountain farmer and preacher, began teaching his flock that those with divine faith could pick up snakes and not be harmed even if bitten (Gospel of Mark 16:17, 18). His following grew during the years. On the third Saturday and Sunday of each month, the mountain folk gathered in the Pine Mountain church for services which oftentimes lasted all day and far into the night. For hours the wooded hillsides would echo with sounds of cymbals, clapping hands, and sing-song chants which beat on the senses in a monotone like the steady pounding of voodoo drums in the jungles.

This is still the practice in the new series of snakehandling demonstrations.

The emotional effect is terrific. Some ten years ago the Associated Press sent Staffman Don Whitehead to Harlan County, Ky., the fountain head of the present
movement. He reported as an eye witness:

Women leap to their feet as though convulsed and their bodies jerk with such spasmodic force it seems their spines would snap. Any "brother" may preach who feels the urge. With his shirt sleeves rolled up and perspiration pouring from his face.

A cult member who "feels the spirit" takes a writhing snake and wraps it about his head or fondles it in his hands. Then it is passed among the believers.

To the cult members, the serpent is symbolic of evil and to handle the snake is a visual demonstration of the power of good over evil.

It is not true to say that the snakes never resent the handling. Frequently they sink their fangs into the handlers—but these invariably disdain medical aid and rely on their “faith” to make them well.

One leader, G. W. "Little George" Hensley, of Pineville, Ky., says he has been handling snakes in religious services for 28 years and has been bitten 250 times with little effect because he has "faith."

SOMETIMES THE CHARM IS BROKEN

Sometimes the strange relationship by which the reptiles either do not strike or inflict no mortal wound is broken. The devotee then has only an even chance with his unbelieving brother to overcome the effects of the venom. Some times he doesn’t. The first Rev. Johnny Hensley of that name (not the one mentioned above) was killed by the bite of a diamond back rattler in 1944. One of the cultists ascribed Hensley’s death to the fact that he "had been away from the faith for some time," working in a defense plant. He had not "kept close to God." "He was cautioned to be careful, but he proceeded to take them [the snakes] up anyway," and received a fatal bite in the left arm. When Hensley was bitten, he refused medical aid, contending that he had "rather die in the faith than trust doctor's medicine." He was the seventh member of the group to die by snake bite.

At Sarasota, Fla., during the earlier era of manifestations Mary Murray, eighteen year old girl preacher, offered to demonstrate most forcibly and fully how one who had attained the state of holiness and purity was immune to evil. Her own person would furnish the object lesson. No harm could reach her, she said; no sin contaminate, no evil assail.

She took up a huge rattler and wound it about her throat. "He will not strike me!" she cried. "Even the Arch-Evil does not as-
sail one whose heart is pure! And even should the snake strike me, its bite would in no wise harm me!" The congregation, gazing dumb with horror, saw the rattler draw back and dart at the girl's left arm.

Miss Murray refused all medical attention and went about as if nothing had happened. She died in horrible convulsions.

AMONG THE FAKIRS

Some of the details of the strange phenomena connected with snake handling have been given above as suggesting a rational explanation of the phenomenon.

We do not look for an interpretation of the facts (which are unquestioned) in religion, certainly not in the teachings of the New Testament. That the promise given to the first messengers of the Gospel included immunity against poison, also against the venom of serpents, is unquestionable. We have the New Testament account of the example of Paul, who was bitten by a serpent when gathered with the natives after shipwreck around a warming fire in Malta, and escaped unscathed. Missionary history records similar instances in the record of Gospel messengers entering untouched pagan fields. Also certain stories of native medicine-men mixing a deadly potion with the meal offered the missionary, with negative results, are absolutely authentic history. However, that throughout the Christian era the confessors of Christianity should handle vipers and cobras with impunity and eat arsenic or drink carbolic acid, without evil effects, is certainly not the meaning of the passage in Mark. It is also quite unthinkable that an evidence of Christianity or proof of a living faith that was denied to an Ignatius or Athanasius, an Augustine and a Luther, a Paul Gerhardt and a Charles Wesley, a Frances Havergal or an Isaac Watts, should be granted to a church of God preacher in Harlan County, Ky. But there are other reasons why we believe that the rational approach is justified in explaining the immunity of these cultists to deadly reptiles.

In the first place, most of those bitten by rattlers or copperheads recover without medical attention. Next consider the strange fact that similar phenomena have been reported from earliest ages and are a common thing among non-Christian devotees today. Snake charmers are shown on the temple inscription of ancient Egypt. Snake worship was a cult referred to in the Letter to the
Romans (Chapter 1:23). Crowds of Roman skeptics stood amazed when the fakirs of that day made their demonstrations in the market places. In India and North Africa the snake charmer still draws his crowds, shuddering at the sight of the cobra as it rises with swollen neck from the urn, and I do not believe that the fangs of these animals have been drawn. That may be the case with animals handled by rank imitators ("fakers")—but believe me, there are real fangs in the heads of the snake that rises to the weird notes of the true fakir's flute.

There are other phenomena reported from Kentucky that lead us to the true solution. We have seen pictures taken by staff photographers of great dailies showing the hands of fire handlers in the flames of the kerosene torch or in the blaze of an acetylene lamp. Also this phenomenon is well known throughout the world of "primitive" tribes, photographs in our possession showing the walking of barefooted Hawaiians across a bed of burning coals.

Close-up views of the snake handlers show them in a state of self-induced hypnosis with all the familiar tokens of fixation in the eyes, lips, and posture. Here is a description by Keith Kerman, writing from Kentucky in 1938:

Shivering and sweating, a man strode and skipped about the rostrum uttering unintelligible syllables—"The unknown tongue." Women, eyes shut, hands waving, wheeled in slow backward circles, their feet pounding the floor; they jerked spasmodically, with the effect of snapping the spine as one would a whip. All sang a monotonous, almost tuneless chant; clapping hands, stamping feet, cymbals and tambourine marked the time in a powerful rhythm that beat heavily on the senses.

In this we have not religion but abnormal psychology, a field not for theological debate but for the psychiatrist.

THE SUPRARENAL EFFECT

You have seen the lion tamer enter the cage and make playful passes with his whip at the snarling beasts. He may have put his head literally into the lion's mouth, with no ill effect. Do not believe for one moment that given a whip and a chair you could imitate this demonstration. The difference is in the action of the adrenal glands. You have them, as well as the lion tamer and the snake handler, but there is a difference in the activity of these amazing ductless mechanisms.

They are situated above the kidneys and throw a substance called adrenalin into the blood. Excitement, especially fear and
rage, will bring about the discharge of adrenalin and this stimulates the nervous system. Any strong emotion, such as fear, produces an increase of adrenalin in the blood. The more combative and pugnacious and excited the animal or person is, the more adrenalin it has. Dr. Berman describes in vivid terms this mechanism of fear:

An instant excess of adrenalin occurs in the blood of, say, a cat when it is alarmed by the sight of a dog. In that cat, at the image of its hereditary enemy, certain brain cells discharge. A nerve tract, in use as the line for that particular message, whirs its yell, to the medulla of the adrenal gland. Through the tiny, solitary veins of the glands, an infinitesimal quantity of the reserve adrenalin responds. And with what effect! The blood, that primary medium of life, the precious fluid that is everything, must all, or nearly all, be sent to the firing line, the battle trenches, the brain and muscles, now or never. So the blood is drafted from the nonessential industries—from the skin where it serves normally to regulate the heat of the body—from the digestive organs, the stomach and intestine, from the liver which usually holds in its great lakes and vessels about a quarter of all the blood in the body and which now is almost drained and blanched. Adrenalin erects the hair of the animal, and dilates the pupils of the eyes. There is an increase of the apparent size, all of which are to intimidate the enemy.

It is this sudden liberation of adrenalin which causes powerful muscular action, as seen in the lightning-like attack of wild animals.

Without question, the release of adrenalin in unusual quantities has an effect upon the sensitivity of outer tissues of the body to pain so that for a short time flames and red hot iron may touch the skin without evil effect. Without question, the physical effect of fear is in some obscure way communicated to wild animals who are thereby encouraged to strike and lacerate whereas the absence of effects (of odor, possibly of goose flesh) on the skin would inhibit the animal from attacking. Concerning the extreme sensitiveness of animals in their native state to those obscure emanations which may be far too fine to be called odors or sensible particles, yet have the unquestioned effect on the attitude of the animal, many experiments are on record. They can recognize fear or revulsion. They strike!

The exhibitions of fakirs, whether in Calcutta or in Pine Mountain, Ky., constitute a profound psychological and physiological problem, of that there can be no doubt. But I can see no religious significance except that against which Jesus warned His followers in the Gospel—"seeking
a sign.” The worshippers crowding around a snake-handling exhibition are not driven by the need of salvation, the desire for spiritual knowledge, for communion with the Holy One in His sanctuary, but by the desire to see a sign.

FROM THE BOTTOM DRAWER

Two columnists and a Mohammedan missionary are given the floor before we sign off.

The first is an item entitled “History Previewed” by L. H. R. in the New York Times. It reads as follows:

“One more question, Daddy. What finally became of this terrible Hitler?”

“For a long while, my child, nobody knew. There were stories. He was hiding in Spain, Japan, Argentina, Eire. You took your choice. Then, in 1960 a rug collector named Donnerblitz died of indigestion in Chicago. That was Hitler. He had been living there sixteen years.”

“But didn’t anyone guess, Daddy?”

“No. You see, except for changing his name and shaving off his mustache, he went right on being himself, damning Russia, England, democracy, the Government at Washington and the U.S.A. in general. So the neighbors took him for just an ordinary American crackpot and never gave him a second thought.”

There is a wry twist to that. The next is a Broadway Ballad by Don Wahn, quoted by W. Winchell in his column of March, 1946. We believe that it is poetry.

Those who have built their castles on a dream . . . Walk blindly down the highways of the night . . . They do not know who wrecks each glowing scheme . . . Or tilts a star or dims a lovely light . . . They are like children—desolate and lost . . . Who once heard music on a distant hill . . . And followed lures, no matter what the cost . . . Not knowing that their dreams are ever still . . . Love is not theirs—and joy is but a ghost . . . That touched them once—and faded in a mist . . . What can they do but drink a mocking toast . . . Musing on lips that they have lightly kissed . . . What can they do—when none can read their soul? . . . Or sense the mad enchantment of their goal?

Finally, Samuel M. Zwemer, Professor Emeritus of Princeton, famous missionary to the Mohammedans, offers a Modernistic Version of Psalm 23. It was suggested to him “after reading much of the present-day jargon of life and morals, by those who have forsaken God as their Good Shepherd and now darken counsel by words without knowledge,” and it reads thus:

The unseen Infinite is the source of my motivation, and I shall not want personality. He maketh me to experience true self-expression and to attempt new projects in the psychology of adolescence. He restoreth the
right complex to my introvert soul. He leadeth me into a preface to morals for goodness' sake. Yea, though I peregrinate through inflation or depression, exuberant health gives me a stiff upper lip. I grin and bear my fate. Good luck is always with me. Its creative impulse and the pep of my *elan vital* comfort me. Surely normal behaviorism and carefully controlled altruism will follow me until the jig is up, and then (properly cremated) I shall dwell in a marble urn forever.

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**Revelation**

I knelt alone at eventide
From worldly cares apart,
And felt His gracious peace descend
Upon my troubled heart.

I rose and faced a glorious morn
To worship in His sight,
And saw His golden radiance fill
All earth and sky with light.

I walked with men on busy streets
Where grief and pain abide,
And found, amidst the lowly throng
The Christ men crucified.

*Phyllis Lindberg*
Goethe once described art as a medium to express what cannot be expressed in words (eine Vermittlerin des Unaussprechlichen). It is wise to bear this axiomatic truth in mind whenever one undertakes to write about works of art. Creators as well as mere commentators are bound to miss the mark when they attempt to put into words that which, strictly speaking, is outside the pale of words.

In a letter to his wealthy patroness, Nadejda Filaretovna von Meck, Tchaikovsky attempted to state in detail the meaning and purport of his Symphony No. 4, in F Minor; but he realized that it was impossible for him to do so. The famous Russian wrote an extensive commentary on the symphony—a commentary which was as helpful to Madame von Meck as it is to everyone who reads it. Nevertheless, Tchaikovsky knew that his explanatory remarks were inadequate. In a postscript to the letter he said:

I was about to put this letter into the envelope when I read it over and was aghast at the vagueness and inadequacy of the program I am sending you. This is the first time in my life that I have attempted to translate musical ideas into words and phrases.

The greater the masterpiece, the more difficult it is to write about it. Yes, one can, I suppose, give adequate and, at times, even ample expression to enthusiasm, and now and then it is relatively easy to set down various impressions. It is always tragic, however, to forget that the language of music is, in numerous respects, altogether different from the language of words.

How, for example, shall I write about Bach's great Mass in B Minor? It is not enough to tell when, why, and how the majestic work was composed. The histor-
ical background of the masterpiece is at once fascinating and helpful. Bach, like most mortals, was ambitious. He liked marks of distinction. There was no vanity in his make-up; but he chafed under some of the disagreeable elements in his environment. The petty fault-finding of those who, in the matter of music, were not worthy of kissing even the hem of his garment amused him at times. Occasionally the cavilling annoyed him. This does not mean that Bach believed, or even suspected, that posterity would honor him as one of the greatest of the great in the field of music. It does mean, however, that Bach, like all artists, had the pride without which there can be no artistry in the true sense of the word.

In 1733, Bach, the busy Cantor of the Thomasschule in Leipzig, sent the Kyrie and the Gloria of his Mass in B Minor to Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. A letter accompanied the manuscript. Bach humbly begged the powerful sovereign to appoint him court composer. He wrote as follows:

MY MOST GRACIOUS LORD, MOST SERENE ELECTOR, MOST GRACIOUS LORD!

To Your Royal Highness I submit in deepest devotion the present slight labor of that knowledge which I have achieved in musique, with the most wholly submissive prayer that Your Highness will look upon it with Most Gracious Eyes, according to Your Highness's World-Famous Clemency and not according to the poor composition; and thus deign to take me under Your Most Mighty Protection. For some years and up to the present moment I have had the Directorium of the Music in the two principal churches in Leipzig, but have innocently had to suffer one injury or another, and on occasion also a diminution of the fees accruing to me in this office; but these injuries would disappear altogether if Your Royal Highness would grant me the favor of conferring upon me a title of Your Highness's Court Capelle, and would let Your High Command for the issuing of such a document go forth to the proper place. Such a most gracious fulfillment of my most humble prayer will bind me to unending devotion, and I offer myself in most indebted obedience to show at all times, upon Your Royal Highness's Most Gracious Desire, my untiring zeal in the composition of music for the church as well as for the orchestra, and to devote my entire forces to the service of Your Highness, remaining in unceasing fidelity.

Your Royal Highness's most humble and most obedient slave

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH.

Dresden, July 27, 1733

Bach's plea was without success. One wonders whether Augustus ever gave the music more than a passing glance. At all events, we know that the work was never
performed in its entirety during the composer's lifetime.

Light on the Mass

These historical data are interesting; but do they shed any light whatever on the Mass in B Minor itself? They do. We must note that Bach sent the Kyrie and the Gloria to a Roman Catholic sovereign, and we must conclude, I am sure, that when composing the work he was at pains to do his best.

Did Bach, the Lutheran, believe that his mass—or parts of it—would ever be presented in a Roman Catholic service? To my thinking, one has every right to answer yes to this question. It is true that more than one scholar agrees with Paul H. Láng, who states in *Music in Western Civilization* that the Mass in B Minor is "definitely beyond the scope of any divine service, Catholic or Protestant." But did Bach himself have that belief? I do not think so. Many of his sacred works—works written specifically for performance in connection with the church service—are similar in form and in workmanship to what he put into the mass. If, in Bach's opinion, such compositions were suitable for use in a service, why would the Mass in B Minor be out of place?

In our time Bach's mass is regarded as altogether too long a work for a service. But did Bach and his contemporaries think so? I believe they did not.

Perhaps the question I have just asked is entirely too academic in character. Nevertheless, it provides much food for thought.

There are additional questions into which we must sink our teeth, as it were, when we consider the *Mass in B Minor*.

Did the fact that Bach used adaptations of previous works from his own pen when he wrote the Mass in B Minor cause the composition to become diffuse in character? Dr. Láng says yes. He speaks of the masterpiece as "a gigantic collection of cantatas, a fact well illustrated by the inclusion in this Catholic work of six individual numbers taken from his earlier German-Protestant cantatas." Dr. Láng declares:

The diffuseness of Bach's B minor mass is... due to the sequence of heterogeneous "numbers." Each of these numbers is a masterpiece of the highest order, but they are arrayed like so many individual cantatas. There is no compelling unity watching over the whole, there is not even a relationship between the two Kyries.

I hesitate to disagree with a man of Dr Láng's erudition, and I wonder if Dr. Láng, or any scholar, would be likely to call the Mass in B Minor diffuse if history
had buried the fact that Bach made use of previously written material. It is true that the Osanna is an adaptation of Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen, which is part of one of Bach's secular cantatas. It is equally true that the Gratias agimus, the Qui tollis, the Patrem omnipotentem, the Crucifixus, and the Agnus Dei were adapted from other works. But did this in itself prevent Bach from achieving an organic unity in the Mass in B Minor? Dr. Láng's conclusion seems, at first blush, to be wholly in keeping with sound logic. But would he have arrived at such a conclusion if it were not known that Bach copied from Bach? To my thinking, the reasoning of the learned musicologist is specious. It is easy to say that the Mass in B Minor is diffuse because six sections of it "contain music that was originally the embodiment of a spirit diametrically opposed to the Latin text to which it was now fitted without radical alterations or noticeable effort." Nevertheless, the conclusion does not hold water. Bach had the ability to weave previously composed music into the mass with remarkable congruity of expression.

At any rate, my own view is, in the final analysis, no less logical than the view set forth by Dr. Láng.

Symbolism

For many years scholars have devoted much attention to Bach's symbolism. Albert Schweitzer has done yeoman work in this field. Extensive lists of Bach's musical symbols have been compiled. This little motif, for example, refers to joy, that one to sorrow, another to peace, and another to fear. Here is a figure which suggests dancing, here is one that has to do with flying, and here we have a little tonal device that causes—or should cause—us to think of falling.

It is fascinating to study the profuse wealth of symbolism in the works of Bach; but it seems certain that no scholar—or group of scholars—will ever be able to compile an exhaustive catalog of these little tricks of the great master's trade. Many of the symbols are still unrecognized.

One has a right to suspect, I am sure, that the agile-brained Cantor wove numerous examples of his symbolism into the Mass in B Minor. Was it a broad use of symbolism when in connection with the words confiteor unum baptisma, in the Credo, he employed Gregorian chant together with polyphonic treatment as devised and developed, to a large extent, in the domain of Protestantism? I do not know. I am asking the question in the hope that
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some man or woman of learning may be able to give an answer based not on surmise but on fact. I suspect, however, that the question cannot be answered.

There is an extensive use of symbolism in the *Crucifixus*, which, as pointed out before, is based on a previous outpouring from Bach's pen. In this tragedy-laden part of the *Credo* the master employs a fixed bass made up of a descending chromatic scale. The effect is overpowering. At the end of the *Crucifixus* the voices go down to an exceedingly low range as they intone the words *et sepultus est* ("and was buried"). The gloom is dispelled as soon as we hear the jubilant *Et resurrexit*.

Bach's *Mass in B Minor* has been recorded in its entirety by the RCA Victor Chorale and Orchestra under the direction of Robert Shaw (RCA Victor Albums 1145 and 1146). The soloists are Anne McKnight, first soprano; June Gardner, second soprano; Lydia Summers, contralto; Lucius Metz, tenor; and Paul Matthen, bass. The singing is clear in every detail. There is not a single trace of muddiness. The diction is sharp, and the accentuation is entirely in keeping with the dictates of sound musicianship. Furthermore, Mr. Shaw knows how to maintain a proper balance between the singers and the instrumentalists. He realizes that the orchestral portion of the work is by no means inferior in significance to the parts assigned to the choir and to the soloists. Many conductors fail dismally in their efforts to give proper and pertinent emphasis to the sublime beauty of the mass; but Mr. Shaw, one of the ablest choral directors of the present time, goes to the very core of the music.

**RECENT RECORDINGS**

**IGOR STRAVINSKY.** *Dumbarton Oaks; 8-V-38; Concerto in E Flat for Chamber Orchestra.* The Dumbarton Oaks Festival Orchestra under Igor Stravinsky.—Both the reading and the recording are excellent. The discs are made of vinylite. Keynote Album DM 1.

**ANTONIO VIVALDI.** *Concerto Grosso in D Minor.* Alexander Schneider, first violin; Eddie Bachmann, second violin; Bernard Greenhouse, 'cello; and Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord.—It is good to hear this beautiful work as it was scored by the composer. Another vinylite disc with an extensive frequency range. Keynote K2003.

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN.** *Quartet No. 7, in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1; Quartet No. 8, in E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2; Quartet No. 9, in C Major,
The Madonna-Mother and Infant Jesus
Unknown Danish Artist
XIII Century
The World's Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947 (Reviewed in this issue)
The Madonna of the Burgomaster Meyer
Hans Holbein
XIV Century
The World's Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947
The Holy Virgin
Swedish artist Hakon Gullesson
XVI Century
The World's Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947
In Futurum Videns (Anticipating the Future)
Romilda Arrighi
XVIII Century
The World’s Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947
The Nativity (South Africa)
South African Art Student
XX Century
The World’s Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947
The Holy Family
C. Bosseron Chambers
XX Century
The World's Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947
Maternidad (Motherhood)
Antonio Troiani
XX Century
The World’s Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947
The Visit of the Shepherds
Wladyslaw Roguski
XX Century
The World's Great Madonnas, by Cynthia Pearl Maus
Harper Bros., 1947
Op. 59, No. 3. The Paganini Quartet.—The three Rasoumovsky Quartets were composed at the request of Count Andreas Rasoumovsky, the Russian Ambassador to Austria. They are great masterpieces and are dealt with as such in the Paganini Quartet's exemplary performances. RCA Victor Albums 1151, 1152, and 1153.

Hector Berlioz. Orchestral excerpts from the dramatic symphony Romeo and Juliet. The NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini.—Toscanini knows how to let every element in Berlioz' orchestral wizardry have its say properly and effectively. RCA Victor Album 1160.

Operatic Duets. In un coupé? from Puccini's La Bohème; Solenne in quest' ora and Invano Alvaro, from Verdi's La Forza del Destino. Jan Peerce, tenor, and Leonard Warren, baritone, with the RCA Victor Orchestra under Jean Paul Morel.—The artistry is superb. RCA Victor Album 1156.

Mozart Operatic Arias. Tortures Unabating (Martern aller Arten), from The Abduction from the Seraglio; Non so più cosa son and Deh vieni, non tardar, from The Marriage of Figaro. Eleanor Staber, soprano, with the RCA Victor Orchestra under Jean Paul Morel.—Miss Steber enters completely into the spirit of these magnificent arias. Her delivery of the Martern aller Arten, with its brilliant coloratura passages, is exceptionally beautiful. RCA Victor Album 1157.

Faith and Art


Perhaps the title of the book is a little misleading and will turn aside some people who are squeamish about "the Madonna." It is quite certain that the book was not intended to appeal to Romanists but that it has a general catholic appeal which is excellent.

The book is far more an anthology of pictures, stories, interpretations and poems related to Christmas and the Christ Child story than it is a concentration on any of the great legends of the Madonna, even though many of the pictures of the Madonna are presented. Fortunately, most of the Madonna pictures, statues, poems, etc., bear a definite relation also to Christ and picture Him always as a Child in her arms.

The book consists of six main portions: "Great European Madonnas" in eight sections; "The Great Madonnas of Asia" in three sections; "The Madonnas of Africa," two sections; "Australian Madonnas"; "North American Madonnas" in three sections; "South American Madonnas" in three sections. In addition, there are four complete sets of indexes: for art and art interpretations by artists and titles; poetry by authors and titles; stories by titles and authors; and an index of music and music interpretations by titles and authors. This last section of indexes makes the book of especial value and should make it a rich addition to any pastor's library as well as to the library of youth leaders, speakers, and anyone of high cultural tastes.

The range of the art reproductions in the book is most amazing. For reasons of economy they have evidently been done in offset rather than in a well-screened cut (the CRESSET can hardly complain because we are forced to use the same kind of reproduction). The poetic contributions of the book range from the earliest poems about the Madonna and the Child to those by present-day authors. Carols, hymns, lullabies and folk
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songs representing practically all of the larger countries of the world are also included. It is amazing to find so much material from Mrs. Jame-son's book, Legends of the Madonna, used in this book. There is a brief note on symbols and their significance in religious art which is entirely too meager to justify its fulsome title. It would be risking too much to dare to criticize the marvelous work which went into the collection of all this material and the book will undoubtedly become a classic in its field. It deserves the highest place and best recommendations which anyone can give for the wealth of material that it contains. If, however, we could voice one faint criticism, it lies in the interpretation of the pictures and some of the stories on art treasures. They seem to be too flowery—trying to say too much heaped up with adjectives to such an extent that they begin to weaken rather than to strengthen the description and interpretation. One misses the direct and faith-filled and vigorous interpretation which complete faith and unwavering trust in the Gospel account would have given. The attempt is quite obviously to satisfy many rather than to give expression to a rich, vibrant faith in the Child who was born to be the Savior of the whole world.

Nevertheless, the book is a must in the homes of all those who truly celebrate Christmas because nowhere else can you find 114 full-page art reproductions and interpretations of them—239 poems, 60 stories, 62 hymns, carols, lullabies and folk songs with interpretations, all compressed into one volume for the delight of those who have some quiet time to spend with things that are beautiful.

The Society for Visual Education, 100 East Ohio Street, Chicago, has reproduced all of the pictures and a great deal of the poetry and interpretation in seven picture rolls at $2.00 apiece. This set, together with the five rolls on "Christ and the Fine Arts" would make a very complete collection of Christian Art for any Sunday school or church school group.

The Privilege of Prayer

DOCTOR JOHNSON’S PRAYERS.

Quite without the literary immor-tality conferred by Boswell, Johnson is a memorable figure in the eighteenth century; but nowhere is this fact more truly, personally revealed than in his written prayers. The thoughtful reader will recall his essays, especially The Ram-bler; his Dictionary; his studies in Shakespeare; his poems; his Lives of the Poets; his tale called Rasselas—but there are few, indeed, who are equally well acquainted with Samuel Johnson’s prayers.

Here is a new edition, hand set in Weiss type, keyed to modern taste and feeling, attractive in form and moving in content. One-fourth of the book offers a scholarly but not cumbersome introduction by Trueblood (author of The Predicament
of Modern Man, and Foundations for Reconstruction) which analyzes Dr. Johnson's sincerity in religion and such topics as his habitual mood of urgency, his keen sense of human misery, his devoted memory of "Tetty" his wife in the long years after her death, etc.

First gathered and published in 1785 at the time of Johnson's passing, the prayers have been republished from time to time, usually incomplete. This collection of one hundred intercessions forms a kind of earnest supplement to the pen-portrait by Boswell. Thought groupings are labelled: Amendment of Life, Work and Study, Health of Body and Mind, Family and Friends, New Year's (18 such), Wife's Death (9 such), Easter (19 such—and by far the best unit), and Last Prayer.

In an era of rationalists and scoffers, this man's religious devotion was of the genuine kind which enabled prayer to come naturally from his heart. The Johnsonian style, not as ultra-classical as that of Alexander Pope's contemporary The Universal Prayer, is formal for a good reason. These are collects, the form familiarized in The Book of Common Prayer: from Salutation, to Ascription, to Petition, to Reason for Petition, to Conclusion. Were we to describe the style in one word, it would be vigorous. Economy of phrase actually aids the intimacy of such short supplications, as in the following example written when Johnson was working on the Dictionary:

O God, who hast hitherto supported me, enable me to proceed in this labour, and in the whole task of my present state; that when I shall render up, at the last day, an account of the talent committed to me, I may receive pardon, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

HERBERT H. UMBACH

A Poet's Appraisal

When a poet talks about another poet, the world of letters pricks up its ears and listens. What is more, it listens intently.

Alfred Noyes' appraisal of the skill and the influence of the agile-brained, glib-tongued, and worldly-wise Roman poet whose name was Quintus Horatius Flaccus is bound to arouse attention and, as a matter of plain fact, to stir up arguments. In this case, however, the arguments are not as important as the attention. One may disagree here and there with what the twentieth-century poet has to say, by way of literary criticism, about the poet who preceded him by twenty centuries; but one must grant that Mr. Noyes, by virtue of his prestige in the field of letters, can do much to rehabilitate Horace at the present time.

Yes, Horace does need some measure of rehabilitation in our era. Those who teach and study the language used by the sharp-witted Roman poet strive in the sweat of their brows to do their part; but a generation which, in large part, has been brought up to thumb its nose at the intensive study of Greek and Latin is inclined to sneer at what it calls the axe-grinding of the professors. Mr. Noyes does not pose as a Latin-
When he evaluates the poetry of Horace; for, as he says, "into that den of lions there is at least one Daniel who will never venture." He is entirely right when he declares that "the textual experts have occasionally shown a certain lack of familiarity with the ways of poets and the impulses under which poets write."

It is by no means far-fetched to conclude that Mr. Noyes' book will do much to foster the cause of Horace. In view of this one can forgive the author for the impulse under which he writes:

The debt of Virgil to Homer has probably been increased by the German discovery that Homer never existed; and the debt of Homer himself to his predecessors is so great that we have at least to admit that they wrote his work.

Painstaking scholarship may become incensed when noting that now and then a strange impulse prompts Mr. Noyes to become entirely too scholarly for his breeches; but, after all, his dogmatic conviction about Virgil and Homer is harmless.

Horace is the first volume in a series entitled Great Writers of the World.

Light and Moving


O who can guess what arm receives Each dead September's million leaves, Or what exacting fire will bless Our long and shuddering loneliness?

These poems, chosen by Frederic Prokosch from his previously published work, are remarkable for their music and their imagery. He sees the experiences of man as tragic but flashing out a beauty that seems to compensate for the agony. Because of this common concern, his separate poems seem like parts of one long poem; with a few exceptions they do not stand as separate units. One of the exceptions is "Molière," in which he notes the passing of seventeenth-century thought:

Flawless, tremendous actors in an antiquated play,
They march through album after album as through the darkness of a wood,
Bearing civilization, like a mask, from yesterday into to-day—
A civilization as marvellous, and as far, far away
As that of Rameses: the intricately spun Laws of reason lie burnished like hieroglyphics in the sun.

Some of the poems deal specifically with World War II.

Lights in the city are covered with a dark blue frost.
Lights appear in the woods: flash dangerously: and are lost.
Lights no longer than an adder's tooth in the grasses Move through the floodlit heavens—still as a star almost.

But in most of them the cause of tragedy is more general—"our passionate and forever Unregenerate spirit."

As the quoted passages indicate, Prokosch has been interested in experimenting with 6-foot lines. There is frequently what might be called a "hovering" relation between the
rhythm of his words and the underlying meter—the reader has some choice in how he will apportion the words. This delicate ambiguity gives lightness and motion to many of the works of Auden's generation.

My America


There is no doubt that William Allen White has become a symbol for at least one era in American life. He was not a Babbitt nor was he a Eugene Debs. But somewhere in between these two poles William Allen White will forever remain enshrined as a typical American. Walter Johnson epitomizes White's position thus: "He was no profound student of social affairs charting broad new paths to follow. He was just a little ahead of his own middle class, and thus he always remained respectable in their eyes, never lost their confidence, and generally was able to capture their support for a candidate or for an issue."

All his life White remained a loyal Republican—with one exception. His devotion and deep personal friendship with Theodore Roosevelt caused him to bolt the Republican ranks in 1912 and espouse the Bull Moose movement. But that was the only time. Sometimes his loyalty to the Republican Party involved him in some amazingly paradoxical situations. He was against isolationism in pre-Pearl Harbor days when the Republican leadership was still inclined to believe that Franklin D. Roose-

velt was deliberately trying to involve the United States in another war. He could never make his Republican friends understand. He aroused, naturally, the enmity of Colonel McCormick and the *Chicago Tribune*. He was fascinated by the spectacle of the New Deal and he had an uneasy sympathy for F.D.R.'s program. But White always voted Republican.

White's mark on Kansas politics was a large one. One time he ran for governor. At all times he was involved in the intricacies of the Kansas Republican Party and state politics. He was deeply concerned that government should be clean and honest, devoid of partisanship. And yet White was loyal to friends whose personal integrity was frequently not above reproach.

William Allen White could have made an even greater contribution to American letters. One or two of his novels, notably *A Certain Rich Man*, have qualities which make them readable even after the passage of many years. When White was reproached for his inattention to literature, he replied that Booth Tarkington had done a better job and that his work, had he concentrated on novels, would have been much like Booth Tarkington's. There is a great deal of truth in this frank self-analysis.

As a journalist, White holds his place with other mighty American journalists. His work on the *Emporia Gazette*, of which he was owner and editor, set a mark very few small town dailies have ever reached. His editorials were quoted all over the world. Readers and leaders recog-
nized that here was Midwest America speaking. To this day his famed editorial *What’s the Matter With Kansas* is a reprint in anthologies, nor will anyone ever forget that great and classic editorial on the death of his daughter Mary.

Walter Johnson’s story of White and the age in which he lived is biographical writing of the highest order. There are instances where this reviewer would disagree with his assertions, as for example when he states that Bryan’s bitter campaign of 1896 marked the close of the frontier era in American history. But these disagreements are minor and are completely lost in admiration for a work of creative scholarship which is certain to have a long and happy life among people who care for good writing.

**Contrapuntal Study**


Philip Toynbee belongs to a distinguished literary family. He is the son of Arnold Toynbee, English economist and historian, and the grandson of Gilbert Murray, eminent Greek scholar and translator of Greek dramas.

Mr. Toynbee was educated at Rugby and Oxford. He fought in Spain in 1937. Soon after the outbreak of World War II he joined the Welsh Guard and subsequently received a commission in the British Intelligence Service. Mr. Toynbee says that his exclusive interest is in books and that it is his ambition to live in the country for the rest of his life and to devote his time to writing. *The Barricades,* his first book to be published in America, was widely acclaimed by critics.

*Prothalium* presents an ingenious experiment in fiction-writing. It is reminiscent of Virginia Woolf’s poignant and brilliant book, *Between the Acts* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York. 1941). There are many excellent qualities in Mr. Toynbee’s highly imaginative allegory of life, death, and rebirth. Unfortunately, the central narrative is not always equal to the burden of symbolism which is imposed upon it.

**Urban Reporting**


We continue to discover America! In the nineteenth century observant Europeans like Bryce described the United States as they saw it after travel; such attempts, however, were rarely comprehensive. In our century the depressions and the World Wars have compelled Americans to re-discover their own country. As a result, for two decades now we have been refreshed with a ceaseless flow of volumes on such topics as states, rivers, regions, cities, and peoples.

Sociologists have become descriptive, scholars have rescued local history from the antiquarians, and novelists have revived the American literary contribution of local color.
Gradually the mosaic of Americana has been built to a pattern; yet, because it was made by many hands, the design is neither consistent nor harmonious. Only a few weeks ago there was published an anthology of critical essays on our leading cities by long-time residents of the respective municipalities, Our Fair City edited by Robert S. Allen. Such a book is on the right track but it will suffer from lack of essential unity.

It is the merit of Cities of America that its 22 essays have such unity. Mr. Perry—author of the prize-winning novel, Hold Autumn in Your Hand, and editor of a collection of Southwestern writing entitled Round-up Time—traveled 40,000 miles to procure modern information for these naturally complex profiles and in each case he has used the same yardstick to estimate and reveal the individual character of e.g., New Orleans, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, Detroit, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Seattle, New York, San Antonio, Los Angeles, Washington, Kansas City, Denver, Cincinnati, Dallas, and a few others. From these articles you will not only learn many new facts about your own town, but will also see how it compares with other American cities in history, achievement, atmosphere, and ambition.

The editors of The Saturday Evening Post, in which magazine Cities of America originally was published serially 1945 and '46, presumably had in mind the pitfalls in entrusting appraisals of our metropoli to native observers. Hence they wisely issued the assignment to a resident of Rockdale, Texas (population, 2,000), a city included as the subject of one of the sketches, to show by contrast a typical small town at its probably most interesting time, Saturday afternoon. The book version includes a bibliography and an index plus 22 pages of photographs (one each for the weekly writeups).

In the style of John Gunther’s recent Inside USA which gives the writer’s impressions of our 48 states, Cities of America is informative, perceptive, gossipy, good reporting on the American way of living. Slanted in places like a release from some local Chamber of Commerce, these pen-portraits are in the main instructive and thoughtful. Here are the homey doings, the market places, the myriad industries, the fonts of culture, the pillars of society and native racketeers, beauty and sordidness, celebrities and trivia that comprise civic character. For the reader who likes an armchair trip to interesting places or desires to be a kind of connoisseur of U.S. data, this book can be recommended in either brief instalments or sustained quantity.

HERBERT H. UMBACH

Panegyric for Patton


This is the story of the U.S. Third Army’s racing and slugging campaigns that began in the hedgerows of Normandy and concluded in the heart of Austria, and of its ofttimes
brilliant, always spicy-tongued and much-feared commander, the late Gen. George S. Patton.

It's the story as seen and told by Patton's executive G-2 (Intelligence) officer, Col. Robert S. Allen, who lost an arm in combat. Before the war, Allen, a newspaperman, collaborated with Drew Pearson in authoring "Washington Merry-Go-Round."

It is highly conceivable that any reader of *Lucky Forward* who might have served in the ETO in an army other than the Third may resent Allen's braggadocio. This cockiness, however, was typical of a great majority of the men who fought in Patton's army and is one of the keys to their success.

This book is a combination of technical terms, smooth flowing descriptive words and Patton's cussing. It contains a variety of interesting photographs and makes frequent mention of units which comprised Third Army.

In *Lucky Forward* (code name for Third Army's advanced headquarters) Allen pulls no punches. He reports that the Nazis feared Gen. Patton more than any other American commander, and that many of "Georgie's" colleagues were jealous of him.

It was common knowledge that Patton had no love for England's Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery and Allen makes frequent reference to this internal friction behind the Allied lines.

The author bitterly criticizes Gen. Ike Eisenhower's SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters) campaign tactics and political interference from Washington, 5,000 miles removed from the front. He describes the "Battle of the Bulge" as a "costly and tragic disaster that was wholly unnecessary, due entirely to failure of command on the part of SHAEF, Headquarters Twelfth U.S. Army Group and Headquarters 21 Army Group British."

"There was no more reason for the Ardennes catastrophe than for Pearl Harbor," Allen contends.

HERBERT E. STEINBACH

**Against Britain**


DENNIS GRAY STOLL, the youngest son of Sir Oswald Stoll, was born in London and educated at Cambridge. A writer and composer, he is well known for his broadcasts on music and literature.

From 1943 to 1945 Mr. Stoll served as a member of the Indian Relief Committee, which was formed to provide medical aid for the famine-stricken areas of India. During his travels in India, Mr. Stoll spent many months in remote Indian villages. He talked with Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, and other powerful Indian leaders.

*The Doctor and the Dragon* seems to be a direct outgrowth of the author's travels in India. Mr. Stoll denounces British colonial rule in India with scathing invective. The English men and women portrayed in his book are weak, cruel, and
stupid. In sharp contrast, there is a decided tendency to idealize and romanticize the Indian characters who have a part in Mr. Stoll's tragi-comic novel. The tender love story of the temple girl who was rescued from a life of shame by a brilliant young Eurasian physician is often obscured by the author's tirades against British imperialism and by his preoccupation with favorable propaganda for the followers of the Mahatma. The vigor and the persuasiveness of Mr. Stoll's writing are weakened by his obvious bias.

Chicago Family

THE MARSHALL FIELDS. By John Tebben. E. P. Dutton & Co. $3.75.

On Chicago's State Street there stands one of America's most remarkable department stores: Marshall Field & Company. Through its doors pass customers from every part of the United States and the world. The store is the mecca of the shopper. It is a wonderland. It is the despair of its competitors. There is only one Marshall Field store and Macy's and Gimbel's know it. They'll never achieve the Marshall Field eminence.

There is more to The Marshall Fields, however, than the story of the building of an enormous fortune from a department store's profits. Here is also the account of how the Field millions, after the departure of the first Field, were and still are being diverted to socially useful channels through the efforts of Marshall Field III. It is true that the elder Field did give generously to charitable endeavors in Chicago. The University of Chicago was helped immeasurably by his benefactions. The mammoth Field Museum along Chicago's lake front was erected by the senior Field. None of these gifts, however, caused quite such a stir as the present Marshall Field's endeavors in the world of journalism.

John Tebbel recounts at great length the rise of PM, and the Chicago Sun (now combined with the Chicago Times). We have the feeling that in this section of the book dealing with the fortunes and misfortunes of PM and the Chicago Sun Mr. Tebbel is acting as an official apologist for the younger Field. Certainly, the crazy adventures of PM reveal the hand of a millionaire totally unacquainted with sound journalistic and financial practices. The Chicago Sun venture carries a better augury of future success, although that unhappy newspaper reveals too often an uncertainty of purpose which is upsetting to the regular reader.

That Marshall Field III has a social conscience is obvious. Strongly influenced by Franklin D. Roosevelt and his political philosophy, young Field felt that a progressive, outspoken newspaper in Chicago was an absolute necessity in the midwest where a rampant form of isolationism was disturbing millions of thoughtful citizens. Whether Marshall Field III chose the proper time and method to counteract this isolationism is, of course, a subject for endless debate.

Readers interested in knowing how to make money and how to build a fortune in the merchandising world
will be enthralled by the account. Marshall Field was a practical, determined, foresighted merchant. He studied economic trends and human frailties. The end of all his deliberations was an increase in the sales in his store. He was hardly human in his relationships, even in his own family. His son died, according to evidence, a suicide. Field knew how to make money but he did not know how to be happy.

Subtitled “A Study in Wealth,” The Marshall Fields is indeed a study of an age when wealth automatically conferred virtues upon its holders. That Marshall Field could be violently opposed to organized labor, underpay his employees, support the notorious financier Charles T. Yerkes, sympathize with George T. Pullman in his labor difficulties is understandable and all too true. No one had ever taught him that money brings an infinite amount of responsibilities toward the community from which he obtained his wealth. Apparently, his grandson knows this. Whether he will be able to keep on spending constructively the Field fortune is still a matter of fascinating conjecture.

The German Underground


Though the title sounds like a Hearst Sunday supplement thriller, it is actually an OSS documented account of the German underground and their two attempts to assassinate Hitler. Diehards who still persist in deluding themselves that National Socialism was universally embraced by the citizens of the Reich might do well to spend an hour with this little book. Fabian Schlabrendorff, whose personal account is here narrated by OSS Man Gaevernitz, was an early anti-Nazi. When war broke out Schlabrendorff was a lawyer in Berlin.

Members of the resistance already in 1942 had pledged themselves to build up in Berlin, Vienna, Cologne and other cities a secret military shadow organization capable of seizing power from the Nazis as soon as the first blow against Hitler’s person had been successfully dealt. A political and military circle was formed. Members were “inspired by a profound earnestness, fully aware of the magnitude of the task.”

Schlabrendorff, himself, undertook an unheralded attempt on Hitler’s life in March, 1942. In the guise of a gift he spirited a delayed action bomb aboard the plane Hitler was taking back to Berlin. The bomb was timed to explode within half an hour. After the fuse mechanism went haywire, the conspirators, undaunted, immediately rallied forces for another attempt. One of the most striking impressions left by the book is the incredible number of military figures in high places who conspired in the plot. Behind each mention of their names in this book, you’ll generally find an asterisk. At the bottom of the page a laconic footnote reports “Executed by the Nazis, July 20, 1944,” or “Hanged by the Nazis.
November 13, 1944," or a similar terse epitaph.

There is a reason. The underground was sure that the next bomb which they set off in Hitler's headquarters on July 20, 1944, marked the successful end of their secret war. Mistakenly convinced that Hitler and his aides had been blown up, the conspirators began to unravel their revolutionary plot, thus betraying themselves to a watching Gestapo. The wholesale executions which follow make grisly reading. Schlabrendorff survived arrest and torture through coincidence and personal intrigue. Gaevernitz came across him in an SS prison camp in Northern Italy along with Pastor Niemöller.

The editor has documented the chapters on the executions with a number of death notes that the military men wrote to their wives and children. These are both pathetic and brave. Most of them are prayerful and express an abiding, unshaken faith in God and the eventual victory of the anti-Nazi cause.

Oriental Biography


Buwei Yang Chao, now living a married woman at Cambridge, Mass., tells the story of her life entertainingly, sometimes with oriental sentiment, mostly with occidental, the story of a Chinese woman of culture. The author is fully aware of the strangeness of some of the circumstances under which she grew up, and evidently enjoys the fun of mystifying and sometimes shocking the reader. For instance, the first chapter is headed "My Parentage and Engagement," but the engagement happened before her birth. Throughout, the deep attachment which the Chinese feel toward their relatives is prominent. It is the motivation for many incidents and colors the entire narrative.

Buwei was a progressive young woman, taking an active part in the revolution which is making a modern nation of China. A great part of the book is devoted to the years at high school and college, with the medical profession as goal. Religion is strangely in the background throughout the narrative. National customs play a large part in the events here described but there is little indication of the sadness and degradation which marks life of the average Chinese. Paganism is pictured as strange, sometimes amusing, but not once as what it is, the source of those miseries of which the career of Buwei was an escape. When a boy is married to a girl terribly disfigured by smallpox, and this at the age of 14, the father-in-law at once permits him to marry another wife in the future so long as the daughter would be given equal standing in the home. Buddhist customs are followed in burial ceremonies, but there is no true reverence for the dead Manchus and while ancestors are still prominent in the thought of the writer, the old family life is gone also in its better aspects. Buwei ad-
vocates birth control among the masses for whom "more children would mean only more slave labor." She helped set up a birth control clinic in Peiping. Her contracts were not with the missionaries but with radicals like Bertrand Russell, who is shown with his bootleg wife on one of the pictures. A few rattling good ghost stories are told.

River Tale
YOU ROLLING RIVER. By Archie Binns. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. $3.00.

The name Archie Binns has become synonymous with the Pacific Northwest. His previous novels, notably Lightship, have conveyed the feel and the sound of this fabulous region in a remarkable manner. Now he tells the story of a group of people in Astoria, Portland and other cities and towns on the Columbia River. In fact the hero of the story is the Columbia, that mighty, rolling river of America's Northwest which is so rich in lore and history.

Time of this novel is the period after the Civil War. There are many stories in the novel. Perhaps the most interesting, even though minor, is the story of Mr. and Mrs. John Fortune and their three children who came from San Francisco to set up their home in Astoria. The Fortunes were determined to be careful, thorough and exhaustive in all their efforts: whether in making a fortune, raising their two sons and daughter, establishing themselves in a pioneer community. That the Fortunes are bewildered by the impact of the burgeoning seaport is natural; that they have difficulty readjusting themselves is also natural; that their sons rebel at having to lead narrowly-regulated lives when pioneer America was bursting at the seams is even more natural. This minor story, of course, is played against the backdrop of early sailing vessels and the unsavory practices in Astoria's days of growing manhood.

Archie Binns tells a good story, although there are overtones of moral coarseness which could have been omitted. It is a relief, however, to read again a novel which tells a story, plainly and simply, for the story's sake.

The Past Recaptured

We read this: "One Back Bay lady declares that the only present her husband ever brought her during the three years of their engagement was a copy of the Boston Transcript which he would pick up and deliver to her on his regular afternoon call." We also read: "She has been known to write a check for five thousand dollars for the Community Fund and at the same time maintain a swords-point relationship with her local grocer who had once made the mistake of filling her telephone order for bread with an extra-price loaf." Here's another one: "For many years, Boston's wealthy Curtis sisters, notably generous in charitable ventures, have been accustomed
to top off sewing-circle luncheons held at their Beacon Hill home with chocolate eclairs neatly and thriftily cut in half."

This book is, without a doubt, the kind to be read aloud to the family. Almost every page calls for quotation. Here is once more the epic account of the rise of the Adamses, the Lowells, the Cabots, the Saltonstalls and dozens of other proper Bostonians. Here, too, you will find that classic American murder recounted in all its gory details: the Webster-Parkman case. Mr. Amory does an excellent job in retelling this tale of how a Harvard professor had the gumption to murder a Bostonian of the bluest blood. Of course, Professor Webster was hanged for his dastardly crime but to this day Webster is condemned, not for the crime, but for his insouciance in daring to lay hands on a true Bostonian and thus bring shame on fair Harvard.

Ah, yes, the Proper Bostonians is the tale of one segment of American life which brings up many nostalgic sighs. Perhaps the Bostonians do look a trifle ridiculous in their penury and in their adherence to outmoded styles. But those Bostonians were backing the Revolution to the hilt; those same Bostonians did build Harvard—no mean accomplishment; and those Bostonians did do wonders in setting up trust funds for the welfare of their fellow citizens.

This is a hilarious book. But do not be deceived because it is easy to read. Back of this book there is evidence of much research and much patient combing of old diaries, newspapers, and manuscripts.

**Missouri Memoirs**


**PERSONS AND EVENTS. Continuation of 80 Eventful Years.** By Ludwig Ernest Fuerbringer. Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis. 1947. 274 pages. $2.50.

In April of this year, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its founding. The CRESSET paid its respects to this anniversary in its April issue.

As part of the centennial celebration, that church body has inaugurated the publication of a series of historical monographs on various aspects of its history and work. The work of Dr. Carl S. Mundinger, president of St. John's College, Winfield, Kansas, is the first volume of that series to be published.

Originally a doctoral dissertation at the University of Minnesota, Government in the Missouri Synod sets out to determine what forces brought on the congregational polity characteristic of that body. The burden of his work is his critique of various theories that have been advanced to explain Missouri's polity—particularly the view that it was brought on by the influence of American democracy on church life.

With numerous extracts from sources printed and unprinted, Dr.
Mundinger has established that the attitude of the early Missouri fathers toward America and American ways would rule out the last-mentioned theory. A brief but thorough study of ecclesiastical theories in nineteenth century Saxony convinces him that the fathers did not bring their ideas of church polity from Europe.

What, then, is the origin of decentralized church government in the Missouri Synod? It is to be found, Dr. Mundinger believes, in the spot in which C. F. W. Walther found himself because of the opposition to him and to his predecessor, Martin Stephan. The opposition was based on their ambitions to set up an episcopal type of government in the Church.

To this ambition the laymen of the Church were violently opposed, and they produced much material from the writings of Luther to back up their position. In the face of this, Walther was forced realistically to adjust his stand and to create a congregational polity for the Missouri Synod.

The book is studded with footnotes, several of them taking up half the page. By this documentation the author has succeeded in taking the reader, point by point, through his entire argument. At times, however, it seems to this reviewer that the documentation is unnecessary and cumbersome. Thus, on page 83, fourteen lines of quotation are used to demonstrate that sex questions are often of primary importance in neurotic problems. On the other hand, it would seem that the question of the conflict between the ideology of

American democracy and the thought of the early Missouri clergymen deserves more than a brief footnote on page 203.

The volume by the late Dr. Fuerbringer, president of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, is an interesting companion-piece to Dr. Mundinger's monograph. Spanning, in his own person, four-fifths of the history of the Missouri Synod, President Fuerbringer was in a unique position to describe the "persons and events" that helped make the Synod what it is today. Though the book abounds in details—extending even to many personal habits of the subjects—there is discernible in the random sketches a pattern of church life and thought which will help a member of the Synod to understand his heritage more completely, and the non-member to appreciate the circumstances which underlie the present situation.

Typographically, both books are models of excellence, and the pictures in the second volume are worth the price by themselves.

Wheat and the Railroad


In The Responsibilities of the Novelist, a posthumous collection of essays, Frank Norris states his artistic credo that, of all men, the novelist cannot think only of himself, but must sacrifice fashion, popularity, and money for the greater reward of realizing that he has told the truth. Hence, according to Norris, the best
type of novel "proves something, draws conclusions from a whole con-
geries of forces, social tendencies, race impulses, and devotes itself not
to a study of men but of man."

Among the dozen major works of 
Norris, The Octopus achieves this
idealistic purpose despite its ro-
mantic elements and occasional ex-
travagances by presenting a vivid,
authentic portrayal of contemporary
(i.e., 1901) life in California. Like
Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath or
Dreiser's An American Tragedy, The
Octopus is a significant example of
modern American fiction dedicated
to the correction of social abuses.
For his contribution to the cause of
justice Frank Norris rightly has been
called the American Zola.

When he saw how the world's food
supply was being gambled with on
the Chicago wheat exchanges, he re-
solved to bring the situation to as
many people as possible by writing
several novels about the problem.
The plan of his Epic of the Wheat
(sketched after a visit to a wheat
ranch) reveals The Octopus as part
one, depicting the raising of the
grain in the West and the struggle of
the ranchers against the encroaching
railroad. Part two, which likewise
was completed as a full-length novel,
is a tale of Midwest speculation in
the Chicago Exchange, The Pit. The
unwritten third part, The Wolf,
would have portrayed the consump-
tion of the wheat as bread in a
famine-stricken European village. His
untimely death at 32 prevented com-
pletion of the trilogy, but his con-
cern over economic and social forces
was not in vain. Laws were subse-

quently passed measurably correcting
the abuses against which this writer
fought.

How would Norris regard this
project were he alive today at 77?
Probably he would have developed a
tougher sort of realism. It seems to
us he would feel today, as we do,
that the documentary material weak-
ens the artistry of the story. When
you stop to moralize on realism, is
it realism? Should not realism be
left to speak for itself? Passages like
the following, very near the end of
the ten chapters of The Octopus, are
dated.

The drama was over. The fight of
Ranch and Railroad had been wrought
out to its dreadful close. It was true, as
Shelgrim had said, that forces rather
than men had locked horns in that
struggle, but for all that, the men of the
Ranch and not the men of the Railroad
had suffered...

Yes, the Railroad had prevailed. The
ranches had been seized in the tentacles
of the octopus; the iniquitous burden
of extortionate freight rates had been
imposed like a yoke of iron...

But the WHEAT remained: Un-
touched, unassailable, undefiled, that
mighty world-force, that nourisher of
nations, wrapped in Nirvanic calm, in-
different to the human swarm, gigantic,
resistless, moved onward in its appointed
grooves. ... The great harvest of Los
Muertos rolled like a flood from the
Sierras to the Himalayas to feed thou-
sands of starving scarecrows on the bar-
ren plains of India.

Falseness dies; injustice and oppres-
sion in the end of everything fade and
vanish away. Greed, cruelty, selfishness,
and inhumanity are short-lived; the in-
dividual suffers, but the race goes on.
Somehow the theme thus openly stated is not clearly developed.

The characters are not unlike the downtrodden people in "proletarian" stories. They are set amid great scenes and episodes which constitute the real merit of this book. The reader will sit tensely as he enjoys the progressive stages of Dyke's flight from the posse of Behrman and Delaney. Again, who can forget the ironic effect when Behrman is literally drowned in the wheat he has plundered?

Although it is questionable whether The Octopus will ever be called an American classic, there can be no doubt that this virile story of the San Joaquin Valley of California—of the men who laid out and operated the rich ranches, and of the equally strong men who put the Pacific and Southwestern Railroad through the West—provides in retrospect an incentive to social consciousness.

Herbert H. Umbach
Atlantic Anniversary

The outstanding journalistic event for the month of November—and, we might almost say, for the entire year 1947—was the ninetieth anniversary of the Atlantic Monthly. For the occasion the venerable Atlantic, for the first time in its long and honorable history, departed from tradition and blossomed forth with a pictorial, multi-colored cover page. The list of contributors for the jubilee issue reads like a literary roll of honor, and includes such distinguished names as Robert Frost, W. H. Auden, Mark Twain, Somerset Maugham, Sir Osbert Sitwell, Henry James, John P. Marquand, and George Bernard Shaw.

From the standpoint of this column, at least, the most noteworthy contribution was Frederick Lewis Allen's historical analysis of American periodical literature, entitled "The American Magazine Grows Up." This article, in which the editor of Harper's measures the growth, maturity, and influence of American periodicals during the past century, deserves to be digested and filed by those who are interested in America's literary development.

Allen traces the origin of the Atlantic Monthly to a dinner meeting at Boston's Parker House in the spring of 1857, attended by such literary lights as Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Motley, Holmes, Cabot, and Underwood, together with the publisher, Phillips, which the latter had called for the purpose of establishing a new magazine. The idea caught fire; James Russell Lowell was named as editor, and, at Holmes' suggestion, the new journal was christened The Atlantic Monthly. The first issue appeared in November, 1857.

By modern standards, it was a drab-looking little periodical, with 128 pages of unsigned contributions and painfully small type. It showed none of the zeal for reportage, for immediacy, for human interest, that most up-and-coming magazines display today. . . . . In essence the new Atlantic was designed to perform for
literary America the function which a college literary magazine nowadays performs for the college—to show the best current writing of the best writers.

But what the Atlantic lacked in sprightliness or contemporaneity it more than atoned for in the quality of its contributors. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry W. Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes and John Greenleaf Whittier, John Lathrop Motley and Harriet Beecher Stowe—the new little journal captured them all. "It was as if literary New England, at its most brilliant moment, were determined to put into the field an all-star team."

Off to a brilliant start, the Atlantic nevertheless faced stiff competition. There were already some six hundred magazines in the market, many of these outstripping in circulation the newcomer from Boston. There was, for example, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, with 164,000 readers in 1860; the Country Gentleman, with 250,000; Godey's Lady's Book, with 150,000; and the emerging leader, Harper's New Monthly Magazine (founded in 1850), with an average of 150,000 during its first fifteen years. Compared with these, the Atlantic's 32,000 circulation figure in 1863 seemed puny. Its special boast, however, was that it was "purely literary" and that it featured the work of American writers almost exclusively. If nothing else, the Atlantic stood for quality!

During the ensuing thirty years, while a growing nation stretched its boundaries westward to the Pacific, three journals of opinion vied for the attention of the American intelligentsia. These were the Century, Scribner's, and Harper's—all three intellectually respectable and distinguished in format. Meanwhile, the Atlantic was not exactly flourishing. Although it kept its high literary standards, it steadily became "less electric, less creative, and more academic." Its circulation, as a result, dropped to an all-time low of 7,000 in 1897. We may be able to understand this development by taking a look at the titles of some of the feature articles in the Atlantic of that day: "Along the Frontier of Proteus's Realm"; "The Legend of William Tell"; "A Successful Highwayman in the Middle Ages." Its mistake was that it had become too genteel, too remote from the mainstream of American life.

The Revolution

Then came the revolution. In 1893, Frank Munsey dropped the price of his magazine to ten cents, on the premise—which experience fully justified—that any loss in revenue thus entailed would be
more than compensated by the increased advertising that a larger circulation would command. The process of popularizing the American magazine thus begun by Munsey was continued by S. S. McClure, who began to fill the magazine which bore his name with timely and revealing articles about contemporary American life—e.g., Ida M. Tarbell's history of the Standard Oil Corporation and Lincoln Steffens' exposé of American political machines. Upon the groundwork thus laid by Munsey and McClure, Cyrus H. K. Curtis built a powerful journalistic empire. With the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Ladies' Home Journal*—edited, respectively, by those two titans, George Horace Lorimer and Edward Bok—Curtis pushed the idea of mass circulation to the limit. Thanks to Curtis' policy, national advertising now became the mainstay of American periodical journalism, with incalculable results upon the tastes and thought patterns of the American public.

The technique of mass circulation pioneered by Curtis of course attracted many imitators, such as *Collier's*, *McCall's*, the *Woman's Home Companion*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, and the *American Magazine*, all of which reached circulation figures that were fabulous by previous standards. "The revolution . . . had put magazine publishing into mass production."

Meanwhile the journals of opinion, which esteemed quality as more important than quantity, were beginning to feel the pinch. So much so, in fact, that of the "quality" group that flourished in the nineties, only *Harper's* and the *Atlantic* remain alive and recognizable today. The survival of the latter is attributable in large measure to the leadership of Ellery Sedgwick, who purchased the magazine in 1908 and became its editor in 1909. He injected into its genteel pages a note of timeliness and human interest without, however, sacrificing any of its literary qualities. Thus revitalized, the *Atlantic* soon climbed to a circulation of well over 100,000, and has maintained both its quality and its appeal down to the present. *Harper's*, too, was given a new lease on life when Thomas B. Wells became its editor in 1925, and under him it became chiefly a journal of discussion rather than of literature.

The lesson was reasonably clear. What had caused the procession to the graveyard (of the "quality" magazines) was . . . the editorial—and business—complacency of the onetime leaders of the American magazine world. Unable to find their way out of the ivory towers of learned gentility into the flesh-and-blood world of affairs, they had gradually lost touch
with American leadership. Only those among them who were able to re-discover the stuff of life were able to carry on.

Post-war Trends

Allen goes on to cite a number of interesting developments in the realm of periodical literature following World War I. First was the rise of the “confession” magazines. These still continue, attracting “a big audience on the lowest levels of sophistication” (and, we might add, intelligence), although their rate of increase in recent years has been somewhat less phenomenal.

Next was the success of the Reader’s Digest. Dewitt Wallace, originator and publisher of the pocket-sized magazine, had hit upon the secret of mass reader-appeal: “By gauging correctly the appetite of his countrymen for pellets of easy and varied information, optimistic success hints, and inspiration, he achieved the miracle of delighting millions with a magazine which contained almost no pictures, almost no fiction, no scandal, and no advertising.” Today the Reader’s Digest circulation numbers some ten million.

The third post-war phenomenon was the rise of the New Yorker, which, beginning in the mid-twenties, developed “a new school of American humor, far subtler and more deft in its social comment than anything previously seen on these shores.” Under the editorship of Harold Ross it has become famous, too, for the excellence of its reporting and for the cleverness of its short stories.

A fourth development noted by Allen is the coming of the news weeklies and picture magazines. The pioneer in this movement was Henry Luce, who launched Time in 1923 and Life in 1936, both of them to achieve extraordinary success.

Fifth and last among the journalistic phenomena of the last two decades has been the rise of the pulps and comics. Although their readership is largely juvenile, they are avidly read by many adults as well, with the result that their circulation is huge. At the latest count, Superman, with 1,672,169, was leading the field.

Allen, in concluding his historical survey of American periodical journalism, draws an interesting contrast between the American magazine world of today and that of ninety years ago. Then there were 600 magazines; today there are 6,000. In 1857 no magazine even began to approach a half-million circulation; today there are 32 magazines with a circulation of over a million apiece.

The standard of physical production . . . is superior to that of former days. . . . The standard of editorial
competence is more professional. . . . There has been a similarly increased precision in the business operations of publishing. . . . As an industry, magazine publishing has grown up with a vengeance.

But has quality kept pace with quantity? Allen concedes that our newsstands today are filled with much that is shoddy and trivial; but, he argues, "this goes largely to people who in an earlier day would hardly have read at all." And so he comes to the conclusion that even in respect to the quality of its offerings the American magazine today is doing a better job than its predecessors in the nineteenth century.

On the debit side of the ledger Allen mentions the trend toward staff-writing, the trend toward slavery to editorial policy, and the tendency to cater to the large advertisers. For this reason, he concludes, there continues to be room for magazines like the Atlantic, which stand for "distinction of thought and style, liberal hospitality to fresh ideas, and above all independence."

And so, to the Atlantic, on its ninetieth anniversary, we say with Frederick Lewis Allen: "Continued long life to it—and large influence!"
A BRIEF GLANCE AT RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A SURVEY OF BOOKS

MASTERWORKS OF GOVERNMENT

This is the third volume in the excellent Masterworks Series edited by Alvin Johnson, Robert Andrews Millikan, and Alexander MacIaren Witherspoon. It contains digests of Plato’s The Republic, Aristotle’s Politics, Niccolò Machiavelli’s The Prince, Hugo Grotius’ The Rights of War and Peace, Thomas Hobbes’ Leviathan, John Locke’s Of Civil Government, Baron de Montesquieu’s The Spirit of Laws, Jean Jacques Rousseau’s The Social Contract, Alexander Hamilton’s The Federalist, Thomas Jefferson’s writings on democracy, Peter Kropotkin’s The State, Nikolai Lenin’s The State and Revolution, and Woodrow Wilson’s arguments for the League of Nations. Those who are interested in the engrossing subject of political science will welcome the volume. The Introduction as well as the explanatory discussions preceding each digest reflect thoroughgoing scholarship. Masterworks of Government opens up the entire field of government “at a time when, perhaps more than ever before, the peace and progress of the world depend upon the kinds of government established and maintained.”

TWIN PINES

The members of the Osborne family were delighted when Papa, inspired by the two spindly evergreens which flanked the front walk, hit on the name “Twin Pines” for their new home. The name was perfect. It was euphonious, and it would “look nice on our writing paper, paper napkins, and match things.” All in a twinkling, it seemed, the name appeared on the station wagon and on a sign at the driveway entrance. Even the guest towels proud-
ly proclaimed their identity. The name "Twin Pines" became inseparably linked with the Osbornes and with their possessions. Then the family received a stunning blow. A tree surgeon informed the Osbornes that their treasured pines were not pines at all. They were spruces. Being the Osbornes, they rallied and made a quick recovery. The Osbornes were like that—gay, warm-hearted, and happy-go-lucky. Harvey Smith's light and frothy tale of family life is like that, too—lively, amusing, and entertaining.

**THE NEIGHBORS**

By Virginia Sorenson, Reynal & Hitchcock, New York. 1947. 311 pages. $3.00.

The Neighbors is an interesting tale of conflict and fulfillment. John Kels believed in the literal interpretation and the direct application of the Golden Rule. He was convinced that happiness and success can be achieved only if neighbors live and work together in harmony and mutual helpfulness. His rich neighbor, Phineas Roe, did not agree. Phineas was sure that the sole real satisfaction in life lay in the acquisition of power and wealth and in the ruthless domination of the weak by the strong.

Virginia Sorenson depicts the struggle between John Kels and Phineas Roe with the same simple charm and sensitive understanding which distinguished her earlier novels: A Little Lower Than the Angels, published in 1942, and On This Star, which appeared in 1946.

**PETER ABELARD**

By Helen Waddell. Henry Holt & Co. $3.00.

Back in 1933 this novel attracted a large number of readers who were entranced with the quiet and scholarly manner in which this tale of a medieval romance was retold in the modern manner. Fortunately, Miss Waddell used no sensational means to capture reader interest. With a great deal of imagination plus a vast amount of scholarship, she was able to relate the immortal story of Abelard and Heloise in a timeless manner. Now the publisher has reissued the novel in an attractive format. The drawings by Laszlo Matulay capture the 12th century mood most remarkably. A splendid gift book.

**THE MONEYMAN**


Thomas B. Costain has done it again. His earlier novel, The Black Rose, which appeared under Literary Guild sponsorship two years ago, quickly moved to the top of best-seller lists all over the country and speedily sold more than a million and a half copies. In addition, the screen rights were purchased for a fabulous sum. The Moneyman, a special midsummer selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, skyrocketed to the top of the best-seller charts with equal speed, and it, too, has been earmarked for a lavish Hollywood film production.

Mr. Costain's new novel is set in
fifteenth-century France. It is the story of Jacques Coeur, patriot, merchant prince, and financial adviser to Charles VII. Although *The Money-man* is not a distinguished work, it does present a colorful and dramatic panorama of a troubled and war-torn period in French history.

**ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE**

By Edgar Lustgarten. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

Here is crime fiction which is definitely different. This is the story of Arthur Groome, an average Londoner, who gets himself completely tangled up in an extremely messy situation. The novel actually takes place in a court room. Accused of a brutal murder, Arthur Groome's lawyer attempts to establish his client's innocence. As the story proceeds, Groome's situation grows increasingly desperate. The punch of the novel is not, however, in Groome's fate but in the closing chapter which suddenly opens up avenues of horror without parallel in recent crime fiction. This is a way above average whodunit. Even has overtones of Kafka—and that's saying a lot for crime fiction.
Verse

Winterreise

Bei diesen kalten Wehen
Sind alle Strassen leer,
Die Wasser stille stehen
Ich aber schweif' umher.

Die Sonne scheint so trübe,
Muss früh hinuntergehen,
Erloschen ist die Liebe,
Die Lust kann nicht bestehen.

Nun geht der Wald zu Ende,
Im Dorfe mach' ich Halt;
Da warm' ich mir die Hände,
Bleibt auch das Herze kalt!

(Unbekannt)

A Winter Stroll

Where the wintry blasts have stilled
Flowing brook and leafless brake,
There I wander aimless, chilled,
Through wonted haunts that folk forsake.

Feebly striving life to cherish
Wanly sheds the Sun his grace;
Knowing, when his last rays perish,
Pleasure sinks in Death’s embrace.

The woods now on a village gaze;
Towards a welcome fire I start–
Yet dread the contrast, o'er the blaze,
Of glowing hands and freezing heart!

(Anonymous)

Translation by John L. Astley-Cock
Mountain Vespers

The evening star rides clear in half blue sky
And desolate darkness hangs upon the trees
And on the mountain tips awaiting but the call of night
To fall upon a tired earth and sleep away its cares.
In the vast stillness of the lake and sky
Man’s littleness stands out in bold relief
And brings the splendor of a mighty God
Into the range and feeling of a yearning heart.
The voice of weariness, of sated finding
Of too much of earth bound up with heaven
And eternity, cries out to Him, the Father blest
For care and help and cure of pain.
Oh, blessed God, Whose guidance, love and peace
Have been the solace of our weary days
Pour down into our hearts the gift of love
For Thee and all the needy and the lost.
Be Thou a grace before their thankless meals—
Be Thou a brightness in their self-sought dark—
Be strength to them in weakness dissolute—
Be hope in their so-careless living on.
When they forget to pray let me avail for them—
When they neglect to love let me be doubly strong—
When they refuse their thanks let mine stand in their stead—
When they have lost their way let me be guide
And stay close to my lost and straying side
To be for them what Thou hast been in me.
Upon the pen, the roadside rock, the crooked pine,
The mountain side and banks of snow,
The darkness lies like blankets of Thy love.
No fear can penetrate that warmth, no evil
Strike my easy heart and grateful soul.
The Presence of the Mighty One, once radiant
On the shores of Galilee and stilling waves
Around a little boat, now wanders whispering
In the close-set pines and gives the comfort
Of deep surety and answer to my every need—
My head sinks down upon Thy heart, O God,
And I can sleep and rest for, close at hand,
I find the warmth of my best loved on that same heart—
I am content, and rest against the labors of another day.
When the first edition of Sergei Eisenstein’s excellent book, *The Film Sense*, appeared in 1942, Bosley Crowther, film editor of the *New York Times*, declared it to be “the most instructive discussion of the film art yet put between the covers of a book.” A new, revised edition of the famous Russian’s book is now on the market. In *The Film Sense* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York. 1947. 288 pages. $1.00) the original discussions and analyses are unchanged; but the copious appendices have been brought up to date to include the author’s latest films and experiments. The translation and the preparation of both American editions were entrusted to the capable hands of Jay Leyda, Mr. Eisenstein’s only American pupil. In a translator’s note Mr. Leyda tells us:

This film-maker’s first book of theory is primarily for the use of other film-makers. Yet, without any paradoxical intent, it can be said that only such a professionally aimed book can to any appreciable extent inform the layman or the artist in another medium, or can encourage the reader to dive below the surface of general appreciation.

Mr. Eisenstein is, of course, thoroughly and completely Russian; and, since in the realm of the Soviet Union the art forms, too, are made to serve the state, we can understand what Mr. Leyda means when he says that Eisenstein has discussed in detail certain means whereby the spectator’s reactions can be fused with the creative process, producing a richer emotional expression of a film’s theme. But the thoroughness with which he investigates these means should mislead no one into assuming that in his view they represent ends in themselves, or that an emotion or a sensation represents an end in itself. The purposive direction of the spectator’s emotion is a social responsibility, and all art in the Soviet Union is conscious of that responsibility—in time of peace as well as of war. This social function
which today merits particular attention from our own film-makers—underlines every word of Eisenstein's film theory.

Jolly thought, this, isn't it? It's a thought well worth thinking about—especially now when American producers are defending themselves against the charge that pro-communist propaganda has been cleverly injected into American films. It goes without saying that we do not want our films to be the purveyors of foreign ideologies. It should be equally self-evident that we have no desire to adopt the Soviet practice of shackling the art forms.

Sometimes this job pays off. There will be weeks of seeing films which range from fair to dull, and then along comes a picture like Great Expectations (Universal-International, David Lean). Everyone should see this fine film. Under Mr. Lean's exemplary direction an excellent all-English cast brings to life Charles Dickens' tale of the boy Pip. The acting is superb, and the settings are faithful reproductions of mid-nineteenth-century England. The script prepared by Mr. Lean and his associate, Ronald Neame, captures the spirit and the flavor of Dickens and the world portrayed by him with remarkable fidelity.

Welcome Stranger (Paramount, Elliott Nugent) is a typical Bing Crosby-Barry Fitzgerald opus. Once again Sweetness and Light Crosby goes to the mat—figuratively speaking—with crabby and crotchety Fitzgerald, and once again sweetness and light win the decision. This is clean, pleasant but undistinguished movie fare.

The Broadway production of the Howard Lindsay-Russell Crouse stage play based on Clarence Day's book, Life With Father, broke all length-of-run records in the history of the theater. In spite of sharply increased admission prices, the motion-picture version produced by Warner Brothers under the direction of Michael Curtiz is playing to capacity houses all over the country. Life With Father is filmed in bright technicolor. The members of a fine cast, headed by Irene Dunne and William Powell, turn in practically flawless performances, and the elegant decor of the period provides an effective background for the antics of the red-haired Day family. Unfortunately, the entire action of the play revolves around Father's futile attempts to evade baptism. This is deplorable.

The Foxes of Harrow (20th Century-Fox, John M. Stahl), a screen adaptation of Frank Yerby's undistinguished novel, is as flat and unappetizing as the leftovers from yesterday's soufflé. After two interminable hours of shallow theatricals I could match
Maureen O'Hara's unchanging expression of longsuffering boredom with no trouble at all.

Coming away from There's Something in the Wind (Universal), I found myself in whole-hearted agreement. There is something in the wind, and you can smell it a mile off.

When Singapore (Universal-International, John Brahm) opened in New York City, the first 100 women to reach the box office were awarded a string of synthetic pearls. If, in addition to the rush and the crush involved in being among the first 100 to purchase tickets, these women had to sit through the picture, they earned their pearls. Singapore is as synthetic as the give-away necklaces. It is made up of all-too-familiar ingredients—cops, spies, smugglers, and a bit of war with a dash of amnesia thrown in for good measure. It all adds up to a very dull evening.

Cynthia (M-G-M) was obviously tailored to order for youthful Elizabeth Taylor. Miss Taylor deserves something better than this cheap and trite vehicle.

If some of the bombast, sentimentalism, ridiculous dialogue, and spurious social significance had been trimmed away, The Long Night (RKO-Radio, Anatole Litvak) could easily have been an outstanding picture. In spite of its shortcomings the film is charged with suspense and effectively builds to a dramatic climax.

The Romance of Rosy Ridge (M-G-M, Ray Rowland) presents Van Johnson in a new type of role. Surprisingly enough, the bobby-soxers' idol portrays the country school teacher, who is the hero of MacKinlay Kantor's screen play of Reconstruction days, with simple naturalness. Mr. Kantor's story is, of course, not to be confused with historical facts. This is strictly from Hollywood.

Everyone seems happy about The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (RKO-Radio, Norman J. McLeod) except James Thurber, the author of the short story from which the screen play was taken. Readers of Life magazine know what Mr. Thurber thinks of the picture. Danny Kaye plays the timid, daydreaming hero of the Thurber story with his customary dash and with apparently inexhaustible energy. The Secret Life of Walter Mitty is decidedly uneven. There are moments of sparkling gaiety and delightful nonsense; but there are other sequences which are flat and confused.

Down to Earth (Columbia, Alexander Hall) is a lavish technicolor musical production built around the theme successfully employed in Here Comes Mr. Jordan—a theme which has been worn threadbare in the umpteen unimpressive copies of Mr. Jordan
which have been ground out in recent years. Rita Hayworth fans will find this lively and satisfactory entertainment.

*Desert Fury* (Paramount, Lewis Allen) presents Lizabeth Scott in a ridiculous and unsavory story of violence and hostility. The technicolor effects are harsh and exaggerated.

In *Desire Me* (M-G-M) Greer Garson positively wallows in a series of emotional crises. You'll suffer, too, if you go to see this dreary Enoch Arden drama.

Everyone in *Deep Valley* (Warners) tries hard to make this an unusual picture. The effort is wasted on an unconvincing plot and on mawkish dialogue.

*Kiss of Death* (20th Century-Fox, Henry Hathaway) is a hard-boiled, coldly realistic murder mystery.

*Lured* (United Artists) tries for laughs as well as for chills.

The Thin Man is back after an absence of three years. *The Song of the Thin Man* (M-G-M) is moderately entertaining.
In many ways it seems more difficult now than it was in the war years to grasp the true meaning of the Christmas season and to relate it to the contemporary scene. The prayer "be born in us today" somehow says little to the false prosperity and smug security of the world of Christmas 1947.

The Garland which our Associate Editors have laid at the Manger this year seems all the more fitting for that reason. From their variety of interests and experiences they bring an offering to the Child, lighting up the scenes and shadows of the modern world and praising Him who was born to bring good tidings to all people.

If the world we know is ever to become anything like the world Christ came to save, there must be more of such insight and such faith. We therefore commend this year's "Christmas Garland" to the attention and devotion of all our readers.

It seems to us that the "Reading Room" for this month is especially useful and interesting. President Coates is to be commended for his careful summary and analysis. (Wistfully, we have been wondering whether and how, in 2027, the CRESSET will celebrate its ninetieth anniversary. Probably no member of the present staff will have to be concerned particularly about that problem, however.)

Next month we shall present the second part of the essay on "The Spell of Saint Thomas" begun in our June issue. Part II will be an attempt to assay the available resources for a Protestant answer or equivalent to Neo-Thomism.

The entire editorial staff of the CRESSET join with the Editor in bespeaking the benediction of Christmas upon all our readers and friends.