

NOCTURNE AT NOON—1605

BY THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

WALK quietly, Coyote,
The practical people are coming now
Into the juniper, into the sage arroyos,
Where the smoke is sweeter than anywhere
And the mud is ready for building
The city of Santa Fé.

While the Puritans over in England
Are getting ready to whisper,
There is a way and we will build a ship,
People in motion are looking at the sage
And seeing where the yellow goes in August
In all the violet sage and silver sage
Along the Rio Grande,
Not that they need the yellow on a faring,
But knowing where it is
And what hills are behind it,
As gulls know where an ochre billow beats
On something that is rock.

Coyote, on the silver road of Spain,
Stalk in the noon, the little mice are dozing,
While you are panting, evening comes to Spain,
Darkens the sculptured rats in Tarragona,
Closes the last Sevillian marigold,
Blackens the windows in Our Lady of the Sea,
And the sailors' sheds grow dim in Barcelona.

Be soft, Coyote of the noon,
Far to the east here is an evening that
Is more than many nights:
This evening, for the first time in the world,
Will Shakespeare leads a madman to his heath
Against the wisdom of a patient fool;
This evening, for the first time in the world,
The little hoofs of Don Quixote's nag
Start striking fire from flinty roads of Spain,
A little trot today, some salty grass,
The first star and the last pale cloud are set.
The cloud is over England, Lear is ebbing

Into the northern lightning of the air;
Somewhere there is a storm, my Sancho Panza;
The star is sinking in the Rio Grande,
Where Cradle Flower with teeth white as a beaver's
Laughs at her lover, Medicine of Corn,
Weaving his body through a hoop of osier.

Be still, Coyote in the noon,
You cannot see the sinking of the star
Into the burnt slit of the Rio Grande,
At noon, Coyote, stars are frail as pollen,
But Lope de Vega's gone to bed,
Philip the Third has gone to bed,
And the child Velasquez sucks his thumb
In the blackness of Madrid,
But Will Shakespeare hasn't gone to bed
And over England lightning flashes,
Soft, Coyote, Lear is mumbling
Into the northern wind.

Quick! To the south, Coyote, look!
Is it a rabbit in the noon?

No hare, Coyote, those are ears
Of a mule that comes up the deep arroyo,
Ears in the grass on the edge of the mesa,
Up comes the head, it's the head of a mule;
O soft, Coyote in the noon,
Oñate comes up the deep arroyo,
Rides up the silver road of Spain,
Juan de Oñate's over the edge now,
Stare, Coyote, at Oñate,
Have you seen a peacock plume before?
Or a spur as heavy as two young turkeys?

Still, Coyote, see his face,
For the mud is ready for building now
The palace of Santa Fé,
See the faces red and black behind him,
The practical people are coming now,
The Mother of Christ rides up the mud,
There's another friar on the left,
They're up on the silver sage again,
They see where the yellow is again,
The mud is ready for making walls
Where the smoke is sweeter than anywhere.
Be still, Coyote in the noon,
The practical people come.

THE LAND OF LAUGHS

BY LOUIS ADAMIC

THE illustrious Dr. Michael Pupin tells in his inspiring autobiography that on reaching these shores as a young boy he congratulated America on her new acquisition . . . "and I was somewhat surprised," he adds, "that the people made no fuss over me when I landed." Young Michael had in him the stuff of which eminence is made, and knew it. He believed that the United States was just the place for a lad of his make-up, for wasn't it the country wherein Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln had attained to glory?

Unluckily, on my own arrival from the same wilds that had held Dr. Pupin I had no such lofty notions of myself, nor of the United States. As a boy in the Old Country I had heard and read that it was a fantastic place wherein things happened daily that were elsewhere inconceivable. In America two and two made five. It was a bedlam of lunatics, of hurry and turmoil. One doubted gravely that it had a soul. It was full of devils in human form who preyed upon honest, innocent, God-fearing immigrants.

But I had also heard that, while all this was true enough, in America one could make a great deal of money, wear a white collar and have polish on one's boots, and eat meat and white bread every day, even if one were an ordinary workman. In some mystical way, in America one was considered the equal of the next man, and allowed to say whatever one felt, and walk up to the President and pump his hand. There were no beggars in America. It was the Golden Country, the Land of Promise. I had seen pictures of Manhattan Island, of the Woolworth Building, of Niagara

Falls, of the Statue of Liberty, and of Pennsylvania towns with tall chimneys emitting horrible clouds of smoke. In Slovene translations I had read "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "The Last of the Mohicans" and a number of dime novels dealing with the brilliant adventures of bold Yankees among the Indians.

From all these sources I had gathered that America must be a vast, wild, exciting place, certainly preferable to the tame and pious Jesuit school wherein my parents, apprehensive for my immortal soul, wanted to send me, that I might be shielded from evil and study for Holy Orders.

Professor Pupin further tells of the exquisite deference with which he was treated by the immigration authorities at Castle Garden. No doubt he had it written all over him that he would become a great personage some day. Alas! I bore no such marks. On the contrary, the eagle-eyed Uncle Sam figured me out as a bad one almost as soon as I set foot on American ground, and saw fit to administer to me an official reprimand and warning.

A kind relative of our family living in New York called for me on Ellis Island, but before I was released to him the inspector asked me who he was, and I replied that he was my uncle. A moment later they called him into the examining-room and asked him to state his relationship to me. He said that he was a distant cousin of my mother's, whereupon one of the officials, sitting behind a great desk on a high platform, with Old Glory at his back, fairly burst with righteous wrath. What did I mean by lying? Speak-