

OCCUPATIONS

BY JAMES RORTY

TRADING is never good; better the slave's sweat, the slave's hate.
They crack rock in Atlanta, they picked oakum in the
Piraea;
Here traders smoke too many cigarettes, confer, argue, drool words,
make money.
Liars, cheats, pickpockets—the Scythian helots in the Piraea had
the best of it.
Sam and Abe in Atlanta break their backs, but they don't have
to lie.

II

Killing is good, simple and good, whether in the name of God or
otherwise.
Our forefathers had the knack of it, to keep the stream clear, the
soil turned and fertile;
For gain or pleasure, but not by accident; the machines grew fat in
the Great War, but not men.
Ten million men slain without benefit; even so, better than peace
and ten million slaves eating at the slop-pail of the machine's
mercy.

III

Peace is not good, but the fake magicians are amusing;
Peace without victory; government without power; change without
danger; machines without men; brick without straw; wine into
water; love without hate.
Is it good to be a magician? No: a megaphone through which the
machine speaks; he means nothing, changes nothing.

IV

Knowledge is good, the eternal chess-game with the Unknown al-
ways winning.
In the end, the sage does well to put aside the pawns, love wildly,
or kill.

But knowledge is good; knowledge makes change, and change is good.

V

Love is good, so it be merciless.

Having eaten death many times over, I am full of love.

Who eats death can never die; he moves in a storm of love, as
the electrons storm in the atom.

This love I sing: a storm sweeping the world after the long drought
of fear and pity.

After drought, storm; after death, life; after pity, love stabbing with
the sword of hate.

Is it too much that you should hear this music? Yet you shall dance
to it.

EDITORIALS

Quantilla Prudentia Regatur Orbis

If the statesmen of Christendom really had any of the wisdom they pretend to they would prohibit talking news-reels everywhere. For so long as such things are permitted they will have to appear in them, and every time they appear they do irreparable damage to the general respect for their trade. One day last July, dodging into a movie-parlor in New York to escape the heat of Broadway, I saw a reel showing the three current mastodons of British statecraft—MacDonald, Baldwin and Lloyd-George—, all of them making speeches. I had myself enjoyed the honor of witnessing these gentlemen in person, and hence their appearance did not shock me, but the effect upon certain other members of the audience was plainly very painful. It was at a time when the three were once more parading through the newspapers as saviors of the world. But what the people saw and heard was simply a trio of shabby and preposterous politicians—no better and no worse than so many American Congressmen. A glance at them was sufficient to show that they were as little fit to save the world as they were to square the circle. Unluckily, the crowd got far more than a glance: it had to look at them steadily for four or five minutes, and while it looked it had to listen to their speeches. And when they were wafted away it was confronted with a jerking, grimacing image of the Hon. Henry L. Stimson, LL.D., Secretary of State in the Cabinet

of Lord Hoover, also accompanied by chin music. There was a great moan of relief when he faded into three frank mountebanks—Jimmy Walker, Joe Weber and Lew Fields.

The talkie, I believe, bears far more harshly upon such exalted personages than the old silent movie. The latter permitted them to strike effective poses, and to hold them. They could prepare themselves by settling their coat-collars, fixing their cuffs, plastering their forelocks, and choosing their backgrounds. Above all, they could keep their mouths shut. The talkie strips them of all such protections. They are forced to perform according to their nature, to show their actual professional stuff, to be themselves. They have to open their mouths as wide as possible, and to roar their wisdom into the microphone. The public effect is inevitably disastrous to their reputations. The great masses of the plain people go to see and hear a Talleyrand, a Metternich or a Bismarck, mounted on a charger and in a gilt frame, but what confronts them, if MacDonald is dished up, is a forlorn little soap-boxer with long hair, or, if Lloyd-George is the bill, an older, beefier and moldier soap-boxer with longer hair, or, when Stimson has his turn, a Wall Street lawyer with his shirt-tail afire.

Such august and puissant men, I suppose, do not deign to view their own films; no doubt they send their secretaries or their daughters-in-law to report, and are humanely deceived. The late Woodrow Wilson was hornswoggled in somewhat