

## CAPSULE WISDOM

THE AMERICAN MERCURY's monthly Stuffed Shirt Awards are bestowed upon the authors of the following assorted profundities:

**Thomas J. Pendergast**, Kansas City boss, after his indictment: "There's nothing the matter with me — they persecuted Christ on Good Friday and nailed Him to the cross."

**Stephen F. Chadwick**, National Commander of the American Legion: "The Dies Committee is the most important thing to the American people since the Constitution."

**Senator Robert R. Reynolds** of North Carolina: "The only people in the world who are excited about what is going on in Europe are the people of the United States."

**Mohandas K. Gandhi**: "All should resort to simultaneous disarmament. I am certain as I am sitting here that this heroic act would open Chancellor Adolf Hitler's eyes and disarm him."

**Oswaldo Aranha**, Brazil's Foreign Minister: "Only communists repudiate their debts."

**James J. Hines**, Tammany chief, after his conviction: "Dewey has his conscience to live with."

**Viacheslav Molotov**, Premier of Russia: "The basic historic task of the second Five-Year Plan has been fulfilled — all exploiting classes have been completely eliminated."

**Dr. Charles Seymour**, President of Yale: "Boys now never go from Yale to saloons."

**Senator Key Pittman**, chairman of Foreign Relations Committee: "Nothing any witness could say would change my mind on the subject at all."

**Count Stephen Csaky**, Hungary's Foreign Minister: "I have formal assurance that Germany does not intend to attack either Rumania or any one else."

**Dr. Henry Noble MacCracken**, president of Vassar College: "America is God's last chance to save the world."

► *The creator of H\*Y\*M\*A\*N K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N  
visits a Five-and-Ten Cent Follies in Chicago.*

## PEEP SHOW

BY LEONARD ROSS

CHICAGO's Loop ends at Van Buren Street. State Street south of that is the asylum of burlesque shows, pawnshops, flophouses, chili parlors, hamburger joints, and noisy saloons where you can get a stein of beer for a nickel and a deadly glass of gin for a dime. This is the Bowery of Chicago — flashy, bawdy, vulgar; the sidewalks are always sprinkled with cigarette butts, the air heavy with sweaty smells. The commoners who ramble up and down this impolite stretch are what is known as down-at-heelers — misfits, offcasts, bums.

I explored South State Street on a muggy spring afternoon. It was like walking through a particularly cheap carnival. Values have gone haywire here. A pair of socks sells for 8¢, ties for 9¢, undershirts for 11¢. You can buy razor blades for a penny, and 50¢ will get you tatooed for all time by the Tatoo King. On the cultural side, South State Street is right up there fighting. It is clogged with gimcrack movie houses. *Wages of Sin* ("Deceived and Deserted She Shot Her Las-

civious *Betrayer!*") can be seen for 10¢. "Marihuana — Weed With Roots in *Hell!*" runs up into more money — 15¢. If neither of these parables intrigues you, there is always good old *White Slave Racket Exposed!* — or even *Abyss of Shame!*, showing "Pure Maidens Devoured By The Vulturous Passions of Men!"

It wasn't easy to steel myself against the whispers from the *demi-monde*, but I did — at first. Then, weakened by the moral crisis, I surrendered to the evil eye of a place called "Continuous Show — Special Today — 5¢." This was a really miserable dive with drawings of happy, nude women all over its open foyer. Tantalizing signs sent my metabolism way up by proclaiming: "Daring!" "Sensational!" "Reveals *all!*" "Straight From Paris Exposition!" (It didn't say which one.) Over the ticket booth was this placard: "Nickel-Odium." There was no telling *what* the mind that thought that up might do next, so I paid my 5¢ and went inside.

The interior was bare, dirty, and