

## THE LOR AND THE PROFITS

by RING LARDNER

Mr. Leahy:—If Your Honor please, may I put in a word, and will not take up no ncessary time, but merely wish to call Your Honor's tension, and will merely state that here is a trial, though I do not concede for one instant that we are having a trial here, but merely a ex parte, one-sided—what we are holding here is no more and no less than a ex parte—why my client, if Your Honor insist—why no court in the land would uphold, which we expect to prove if Your Honor insist—

The Court:—The stenographer will please repeat the question.

Mr. Leahy:—Just a moment, if Your Honor please, and I may be able to save Your Honor a lot of time, I merely wish to state that here is a ex parte, one-sided proceeding whom the witness, not only the witness himself, but Your Honor himself and the witness himself; yes, and I will go so far as to include counsel for the committee themselves; and if I may be pardoned the seeming personal reference to myself, which I think Your Honor will permit in this case that it is not my own, sole, solitary, unsupported statement or boast or claim, and it is not like I was making some claim that is susceptible from proof, but may be found in the records of the State Bar Association which no doubt Your Honor have the access or can secure same for you at a moment's notice, though I think it is in the minds of every legible person in this state, at least in this room, without consulting no records, but is common hearsay knowledge known to Your Honor and to counsel and to the witness without wasting the time acquired to consult no records; I refer to my graduation laudum cum laude and with praise, and am proud to state at this junction that both I and Your Honor shared with you the proud distinction of both being elected to the Phi Beta Kappa with bells, and without wasting no more time, would like to point out that both I and Your Honor and my client and even counsel for the committee themselves, all four of us have occupied at one time another the honor of a judiciary court bench, not only in the municipal, or in other words, owing to the personal experience of we who are involved in this trial—though not for one instant do I concede—in this ex parte—it occurs to me that with all four members familiar with all matters of law and legal procedure and all matters of parliamentary law, it occurs to me that we ought to here and now set a model for the conduct of all future trials—though not for one instant—a model for ex parte or other legal procedure in regards to salvage of time and necessary verbiage like is usually expended and spent and wasted in these kind of hearings.

The Court:—The stenographer will please repeat the question.

Stenographer: "Mr. Witness, it is charged that on the evening of 1922, you were occupying a room in the Hotel Commodore in New York City and that a Mr. Hematite Scapple, who drove the bus franchise between Elyria and Cleveland, was there to see you on business. What did he look like?"

Mr. Leahy:—I object to the question on the ground that it is collateral.

The Witness:—I wish I had some.

The Court:—Objection sustained, the witness may answer and the Court won't listen.

The Witness:—Mr. Scapple, or Tormey, or Hedges—I didn't quite get the name. The hotel register would show.

The Court:—Was he stopping there himself?

The Witness:—Who, Mr. Cranston? I wouldn't know. I never took a tax-payer's name in my life. He may have been anybody; I don't keep stubs. It ought not to be difficult for Your Honor to realize that at certain times of the year—the office always did the ordering unless we were having guests—I asked him to lie down while I took a nap—the hotel register would be the best evidence.

The Court (addressing Mr. Waldron):—Has counsel the register?

Mr. Waldron:—What hotel? What year?

The Court:—Commodore, 1922.

(Mr. Waldron searches his compact, finds the register and flicks it across to the Court's desk.)

The Court (looking through the K's):—Here's the name, Tormey, but it's in the K's.

Stenographer (under her breath):—The man was an imposter.

Mr. Leahy:—Your Honor, I object to the stenographer testifying under her breath. If she wants to call Mr. Tormey an imposter, let her say it out loud.

Stenographer:—You have quick ears.

Mr. Leahy:—You're no Mona Lisa yourself!

The Court:—The witness may proceed.

The Witness:—If this was the same fellow, Cranston—there may be a hundred Cranstons, all taxpayers—Somebody spoke up and said we ought to give a banquet—I don't recall if we gave one or not. A calendar would be the best evidence.

The Court (addressing Mr. Waldron):—Has counsel a calendar?

Mr. Waldron:—What year? What month? What day?

The Court:—Any time there was a banquet.

(Mr. Waldron tears off a portion of the calendar and flicks it across to the Court's desk.)

The Court (looking at the portion of calendar):—This says September 17, but doesn't say there was a banquet.

Stenographer (under her breath):—It doesn't say there wasn't one, either.

Mr. Leahy:—Doesn't it?

Stenographer:—I'm asking you.

The Court:—The witness may proceed.

The Witness:—All I recall about this fellow

Hedges is that he wanted a cigarette. He said he didn't usually run out—I said, "It's oke with me if you walk out, only don't make it much later." He laughed.

The Court:—What at?

Mr. Leahy:—If Your Honor please,—

The Witness:—I told him I didn't have a cigarette—he asked if I didn't have a part of one—I told him I never kept stubs—he laughed again.

The Court:—What at?

Mr. Leahy:—If Your Honor please, some people will laugh at a thing who other people wouldn't see that but that what there wasn't that what the people that laughed was laughing at what, or in other words that what—

The Witness:—This fellow promised that he would go if I would buy him a pack of cigarettes and I said I would call up and get a pack and sign for them—I never carry money on my person—when I get some, I always put it in a safe—

The Court:—Do you always have a safe wherever you happen to be when you get money?

The Witness:—Well, Your Honor—I only feel safe—my dear old mother, he looks like a safe—This fellow Thorpe said he could call up and get a whole carton of cigarettes and sign for them, only hotels always sock you fifteen cents a pack whether you buy just a pint or a whole carton.

Stenographer (under her breath):—I love Mickey Mouse.

The Witness:—This fellow said he would call up and get a bell hopper and send him to a Bank of United States Cigar Store and pay cash for a whole carton—only he didn't have anything smaller than a century note.

The Court:—A century note?

The Witness:—That's a letter you write on the train going to Chicago.

The Court:—Well, if he could sign for cigarettes at the Commodore, he must have been stopping there.

The Witness:—The cigar stand's daily ledger would be the best evidence of that.

The Court (addressing Mr. Waldron):—Does counsel happen to have the daily ledger of the Hotel Commodore's cigar stand for 1922? If so, will counsel kindly produce any and all charges made during that year against a man named Scapple or Tormey or Hedges or Cranston or any similar name?

(Mr. Waldron borrows Mr. Leahy's Phi Beta key, opens a locker, takes out the daily ledger of the Hotel Commodore's cigar stand for 1922 and flicks it across to the Court's desk.)

Mr. Waldron:—Will Your Honor kindly note that I am offering these documents not as charges, but merely as an analysis.

Mr. Leahy:—And that's what the Commodore will say.

The Court:—Didn't the fellow pay his bills?

Mr. Leahy:—Listen Your Honor, the bell hopper that showed him which was the head of the bed is still suing him for a dime.

## HAYSIANA

Not long ago, the internal moving picture censorship declared itself, to the delight of the clergy, the women's clubs and the Minsky brothers, to be against the further film commercialization of sex. A sharp eye, it was vociferously announced, would in the future be exercised to see to it that all sex would be treated, if at all, *pianissimo*. The hot stuff, as it is known to the vulgar, was done with, taboo. Under the happy circumstances, we therefore take the liberty of quoting from some sample film advertisements in the recent public press:

"Week-End Marriage"—"The most sensational love problem that ever faced a generation."

"Westward Passage"—"The story of a wife who dared to wonder if fidelity is everything in life."

"Forgotten Commandments"—"She's yours! She's beautiful, fiery, white-skinned, red-blooded! All she wants is love! Take her! Forget her husband! A rubber stamp gave her to him—a rubber stamp will give her to you. Any woman for any man..."

"Hat Check Girl"—"A miss who missed nothing. She knew everything... a new slant on the wise women of the White Way."

"Born Wild"—"A girl untamed, unshamed, free..."

"Havoc"—"Taunted by her smile, haunted by her kisses, men lied, stole, betrayed and killed in an unholy struggle for the soul of this woman."

"Six Hours to Live"—"Crammed with the thrills of passions and unquenchable longings."

"Bought on Time"—"A pent-house blonde who loved in instalments and wouldn't go off the gold standard."

"Easy"—"Spicy drama of a woman-about-town."

"Red Dancer"—"Silken siren, ruthless with men."

"Glamorous"—"Footloose beauty seeking men and money amid frenzied pent-house parties."

"Forgotten Kisses"—"A woman of the world who made a pastime of love."

"Thunder Below"—"A throbbing, vibrant story of a love-torn woman in a lonely colony of white men. She trades honor for love."

"Mazda Lane"—"Where girls with wishbones wear sables and girls with backbones wear rags."

"Miracle Night"—"Dares to tell you of those things that slumber in the soul of a woman."

"Nurse Smith"—"A drama of desire greater than a woman's will!"

"Beautifully Trimmed"—"A high-riding story of a blue-flame vamp whose red lips laughed at life."

## THE IRISH CENSORSHIP

by LIAM O'FLAHERTY

During the Eucharistic Congress recently held in Dublin, I was staying in a small Kerry town. It has a population of two thousand people and fifty-three public houses. Like almost every other Irish provincial town, it is incredibly dirty and sordid to look upon. In the long back street inhabited by the proletariat I came across human excrement at every second step. There was no vestige of culture in the place. The three local priests were sour and secretive fellows, who, confined their activities to the prevention of fornication, dancing and reading. The only pastime permitted to the males was drinking in the fifty-three public houses. The females wandered about with a hungry expression in their eyes. Shortly after my arrival, the priests of the diocese held a mass dinner at my hotel, to devise ways and means for getting me out of the county, as a menace to faith and morals; but without any success.

Then the Eucharistic Congress came along and the populace, exalted by some extraordinary fanaticism, decorated the town with bunting. In the proletarian slum, several altars were erected in the open air. Around these altars some people recited the rosary at night, while others played accordions, danced and drank stout.

However no attempt was made to remove the dung from the streets, nor any fraction of the dirt which desecrated the walls of the houses and the floors of the taverns. I walked up and down the town, pointing from the bunting to the pavement and saying: "Bunting, dung. Dung, bunting." It was considered sacrilegious.

Unclean offal of any sort, whether in my neighborhood or in the minds of people with whom I have association, is strongly distasteful to me. So is poverty, ungracious tyranny and ignoble suffering. In my work I have been forced in honesty to hold up a mirror to life as I found it in my country. And, of necessity, the mirror shows the dung about the pretty altars. So a censorship has been imposed upon my work, since it is considered sacrilegious by the Irish Church that I should object to the sordid filth around the altars.

The tyranny of the Irish Church and its associate parasites, the upstart Irish bourgeoisie, the last posthumous child from the wrinkled womb of European capitalism, maintains itself by the culture of dung, superstition and ignoble poverty among the masses. And the censorship of literature was imposed, lest men like me could teach the Irish masses that contact with dung is demoralizing, that ignorance is ignoble and that poverty, instead of being a passport to Heaven, makes this pretty earth a monotonous Hell. The cantankerous bullies of the Lord, fortified by their dung-encrusted towns, hurl the accusation of sexual indecency at any book that might plant the desire for civilization and freedom in the breasts of their wretched victims.

So they have set up a censorship of books in Ireland, and now at Irish ports, whose sole export is porter and men of genius, imported literature which is the product of Irish genius is seized and burned as dangerous contraband. And so tortured Ireland, which a few years ago asked for and received the sympathy of the world's intellectuals, now shows herself as a surly, sick bitch biting the hand that fed her.

But it's not true of Ireland, nor of the mass of Irishmen and Irishwomen. Slaves cannot be blamed for the vices of their masters. I am censored and abhorred by the illiterate ruffians who control Irish life at present. There is hardly a single newspaper in Ireland that would dare print anything I write. There is hardly a bookshop in Ireland that would dare show my books in its windows. There is hardly a library that would not be suppressed for having my books on its shelves. Outside Dublin not a single organization would dare ask me to address them. Yet I claim that Ireland is the only country where I feel of any consequence as a writer. It is the only country where I feel the youth and freshness of Spring among the people, where I feel at one with my mates, where I sing with their singing and weep with their weeping, where I feel that I am a good workman doing a useful job and honored for my craft.

Ireland is no land of barbarians and there are no people in the world who love art and beauty more than the Irish. But alas! Our little island has been stricken with a triple mangle of friars, gomme men and poverty. The soutaned witch-doctors have spread terror among our simple folk and, as one goes through the country, it is pathetic to meet in every little town and village timid, whispering individuals who say, "It's terrible here. I can't get anything to read on account of the priests. Have you got any of your books you could lend me?" In the same way, I was told by an eminent London publisher that he receives bundles of letters from sexually-starved Irishwomen, asking for bawdy books. Booklegging may soon become on a small scale quite as profitable as the prohibition of alcohol made bootlegging in America.

Bawdy books! Bawdy houses! Booze! On these three forms of vulgar entertainment there seemed to be no censorship whatsoever during the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. The town was wide open all night and every night. Then the mob went back home to purify themselves by scratching their backs against hair shirts. The militant puritans in Ireland have, in my opinion, staged their last great parade. Before very long they'll be all hurled into the clean Atlantic, together with their censorship, their dung, their bawdy books, their bawdy houses and their black booze. Then we can once more in Ireland have wine and love and poetry; become a people famed, as of old, "for beauty and amorousness."

## THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

In any inquiry into the decline of audience-interest in the present-day American theatre, one factor—often esoterically discussed but because of its delicate nature withheld from print—cannot much longer remain out of type. It is a phenomenon that has appeared in the theatre within the last four or five years and that it has been instrumental in reducing to no little degree not only the persuasiveness of numerous plays and musical shows but the reaction, albeit often unknowingly, of their customers has for some time now not been lost upon certain of the producers and all of the critics. I allude to the increasing number of women players who are of the sexual disposition of the Aeolian-Greek island colonizers.

In the last few years numerous women of this Mylène cast have come to the local stage and, with their quickly felt, if not always consciously recognized, masculine hardness and chill undertone, have made subtly ineffective and even ridiculous the plays and shows in which they have appeared. Love scenes have missed all fire and have become indistinguishable from those played in college shows by boys dressed up as girls. Glamour and sex appeal, those two often critically disparaged but all-important assets of the theatre, have gone by the board. And musical shows, once of a piece with monkey glands, have been converted into so much saltwater.

It is obviously impossible to set down names, places and dates, but it might easily be done. Any one who knows the local theatre would have no difficulty in doing so. Such a catalogue would suggest to many audiences, even if they have not realized before what it was that failed to inveigle them in the case of a certain play or show, the very probable nature of the phenomenon that brought about their emotional disablement. Such a catalogue would recall to them a certain Shakespearean revival whose passionate beauty had all the compelling fervor of an ice-bag, a comedy of wistful love with the flavor of Berlin's Monokol night-club, a sentimental French play whose heroine needed only a pair of trousers to double as the hero, a musical revue whose leading danseuse made a bag of nails seem as soft, in comparison, as a bath sponge, a fantasy from the Italian that took on, in its delicate leading feminine rôle, the aspect of a speakeasy bouncer dressed by Callot, an Ibsen revival whose star actress would have driven old Henrik straight into the arms of the chateleine of the *Für Damen* at the Café Luitpold, a tender little comedy in which, when the leading woman kissed the leading man, he obviously felt like an androgyne, and still another exhibit in which one of the conspicuous women members of the cast played a scene of amorous passion with the leading male actor as if he were a leper.

I appreciate that there is something refractorily comical about any such subject as is here being exposed to print. But there is nothing comical about it when one considers the plays that are being castrated and the box-office, already so troubled, that on many occasions is being forsaken. It is, plainly enough, not a case of morals; it is simply a case of unfitness for certain jobs. These women who bask in latitude 39° North, longitude 26° 20' East, may be excellent workers in other fields of human enterprise, but they do not belong on the stage of war, throbbing and convincing drama nor on the sex-appeal music show platform. Audiences, with their vague dissatisfaction, their inability—with all the willingness in the world—to respond to the dramatist's invoked emotions, and their discontent with many an otherwise at least partly meritorious play, have proved and are proving that. Audiences may not know, but they feel. And even though not clearly knowing, they yet feel that something is wrong. You cannot cast Sappho as Cinderella, or as Juliet.

In a recent issue of the programmes distributed in the New York theatres, one read, in the pages devoted weekly to the well-known figures of the theatre's yesterday, this paragraph:

"In Hyde Park, one day early in this century, Viola Allen remarked on the absence of butterflies (or so, at least the story goes) and her companion immediately set about having things fixed. On the following morning a great flock of the dainty creatures was let loose in the park and by the next year a butterfly farm had been established and thousands of butterflies were being released in parks all through London. Miss Allen was that sort of woman. Her success, according to one reviewer, was 'largely one of personality, of charm, of that womanliness that always is content to go about in skirts.'"

The theatre today hasn't any pressing need of butterflies, but it could stand a lot more women like Viola Allen.

## PROSPERITY

It has lately been the apparent decision of the movie news-reels to encourage the American people in the belief that prosperity is no longer merely around the corner but that it is here with an upper-case H and bells on its toes. The technique of encouragement has taken the form of flashing on the screen pictures showing the return of hundreds of men to work in various shops and factories. The aforesaid pictures, however, lack a certain share of conviction upon one's scrutinizing them closely and observing that the men are dressed in the styles of eight or ten years ago and, further, that they always seem to be "returning to work" just after lunch-time.

## THE DAY OF SURFEIT

by THEODORE DREISER

This is the day of surfeit. Surfeit not only of numbers but of variants of notions or ideas of life, no one of which has the least reality or ultimate import. I refer to various brands and styles of philosophy, religion, social and political beliefs, to say nothing of ideas of duty, honor, responsibility, what you will. Immense and increasing numbers of people have made for immense and increasing numbers of notions, pro and con, and all their moods and struggles and wars, which have at last produced in almost all over the age of fifteen or sixteen a sense of meaninglessness and almost tideless mass that reduces individuality to impossibility and achievement to a dull result of average competition. Almost of so-called civilization—races, nations, states—one might cry, as we do in games at times, "Wipe the slate and start all over!"

There may have been a time when ships returning from Salamis, or runners from Marathon, or a Roman general with his tigers and captives from Scythia were occasions of a great fever of excitement, comparable in our day to the return of Lindbergh from France. But that was in the truly long ago, when thrills were thrills because they related to an almost unexplored and mysterious planet, to say nothing of an unexplored and more mysterious universe. Today we have not one but a thousand explorers of the universe. They are in every laboratory, before every telescope, microscope and spectrum. The news, like the stock market reports, is for daily consumption. Even Lindbergh's adventure has been duplicated and repeated until one more Atlantic flight is about as thrilling as one more Hollywood movie.

There was a time, in the day of Aristophanes, of Shakespeare, of Molière, perhaps, when a play was something of an event. It spelled, for the seeking and unsurfetted mind of the few who could be said to have minds, the excitement and delight that comes with the new, the unexpected, the strange. Now, even one more play of superior observation, psychology or mirth, if there be one such, is still defeated and deprived of great import by competition and surfeit of the tawdry and the meretricious disguised in the habiliments of masterpieces and dished up by purely mercenary interests to the accompaniment of the drums of the advertising office, the squealing of the fifes of the suburban critic, and the general fanfare of the numskull who is intrigued by noise. A surfeit of mediocre plays, as everyone knows today, has at last succeeded in wearying the room-full who could really enjoy a good one. They expect nothing and get nothing.

Too many boats and trains taking people around the world. Too many worlds equipped exactly like every other, with boats and trains and hotels and advertising agents, until at last there is scarcely a world to which one would repair with either dreams or zest. And in so far as the jungle, wherever it is, is concerned, not a sunrise on any jungle today but reveals a zany band of moving picture directors and actor-adventurers, with guns and cameras and machine guns, staging stale and already wearisome scenes with trained tigers and captive and cowed snakes and rhinoceri, while hired Coney-Islandized natives and their children dance about and supply color. Surfeit until, at last, one more jungle, one more toothy lion or forward rushing rhinoceros is as thrill-less as a glass of sarsaparilla.

In the fields of the practical and the necessary, the problems and labors of our general social organizations, what enormous and plaguing surfeits! And, in consequence, pathetic and unescapable defeats. A few years ago (and not so many at that) it was possible to contemplate at most two or three great navies, England, America, Germany, and ponder romantically upon their ultimate clashes. But today, with a half dozen or more threatening each other, and mere commonplace trade to fight over, admirals and rear-admirals and captains are as common as flies. In fact, one more gang of staff officers parading before a smartly polished regiment or ship's company ready for inspection is about as dull and tame and commonplace as one more king or pope or president saluting or blessing a multitude concerning which he does not really give a damn. In truth, any peanut vender or any organ grinder is more interesting because decidedly more rare and picturesque. And as for the plague-like air forces of the world, our skies are full of wasp-like airplanes; yet those who saw the Wright brothers at Kittyhawk or over New York saw all. The rest is surfeit.

The same with books. Their earlier paucity and their present stupendous and meaningless multiplicity. Drug stores, barns, warehouses, auction shops, all full; and all possible readers out automobiling. As for the newspaper and the magazine, thanks be, they have all died. What remains is a mud storm of advertising organs, commercial, political, religious, which all but the dumb and the numskull recognize for what they are: hand-bills advertising nostrums for sale: political, religious, social, moral as well as material. In fact, everything is for sale. But the leading thing they sell is the public.

But worst of all, as I have said, is the surfeit of people, spawned without thought or plan, aimless and absurd, breeding without mental conception of, let alone preparation for, the problems involved. The aimless, drifting shoals, the murky, decaying, putrid wreckage in the bays and inlets and estuaries along the shores of life. Yet with no social or organic thought put upon the matter by anyone, in state, nation or the world at large.

In consequence, and constructed thus, too many cities without plan, without any sane social or economic.

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conomic organization. A few, usually the cunning, not the wise or the æsthetic, allowed in a portion of every city to achieve something in the way of ugly, unæsthetic self-indulgence. And the rest, bound up in warrens, so dull, so depleted, so confined, so starveling as to serve only as evidence of the futility of the millions and of all so-called civilization, or law, or justice, or mind. And worse, with a surfeit of the botched, the futile, the ineffective, the miserable, has come a surfeit of the necessary commonplace and defective things by which they live and have their being—cheap and defective clothes, cheap and defective food, cheap and defective factories, houses, places of assumed entertainment, wretched and even repulsive places of worship, and—last but not least—cheap and defective leaders and political overlords. And, as though that were not sufficient, the surfeit of asylums, penitentiaries, misnamed "homes" for the detention and control of all the affected and afflicted that spring so naturally from these circumstances. But no surfeit of ideas or strong and active revulsions which might lead to a modification, if not a complete solution, of all this.

Yet in wild nature, of course, unclogged and untrammelled by the so-called wisdom of man, one does find a solution of sorts. It is the very rugged one of the law of the survival of at least the strongest, the healthiest, the most cunning. And in no species or tribe of either the insects, the birds or the mammals, does one find hordes of the botched, the half-fed, the half-clothed or the half-alive. The strong unerringly pounce on the weak, or the rough droughts, storms, colds and inconsiderate brutalities of nature generally dispose of all but the most effective. And they remain, in their thus confined numbers, strong to live and enjoy the wild contestful world about them.

But under the banner of so-called increasing wisdom and social organization of man, we have marched—to what—to where? Malthus declared that it was inevitable that population tended to overtake and outrun the means of subsistence. Yet that this is true is now widely doubted. For we see that through industrialism we can as readily have a surfeit of food as we can of consumers of food. Otherwise, why should we be destroying lakes of coffee, mountains of cotton, corn, wheat and, worse, allowing to stand idle and subject to the ravages of non-use and decay the vast equipment of machinery in both its manufacturing and transportation forms? It is to no point to add that while this is going on millions of people starved, or half-fed, or half-clothed, or half-entertained, stand and wait. They could be fed and clothed and still these mountains of things be destroyed.

The solution, if any, must lie in adjusting, not haphazardly but accurately, the number of those who are to be allowed to live and intelligently and accurately share the benefits of such social organization and economy as is possible on this earth. And yet that is not to say that the number already here is to be ruthlessly and arbitrarily and hence selectively decimated, but rather that the right to reproduce, together with the right to continue life, should be more intelligently and realistically considered. Personally, I have always held that it should not be left to the botched and the deficient to reproduce at all. That the insane everywhere, and regardless of all emotional and religious concepts to the contrary, should be extinguished is obvious. That a child's right to live should not only depend upon its condition at birth, but its mental and physical condition at ten years of age is also plain. Previous to that, though, should come intelligent physical and mental supervision by (if such a thing can be conceived) a realistic Government determined upon the physical and mental happiness, as well as fitness, of the limited number in every state. The day of the religionist and the ignoramus generally, inside the home and out, who has had the control of the child, the forming of his views and the training of his mind and body should be, if it is not yet, over.

Lastly, if there are those who argue that here you waive the problem of the semi-defective genius who is later to shine and make the world better and brighter, my answer is that if that be true, then we are here and now contemplating a world that must have been made better and brighter by defectives, for lo, these thousands of years. But if that is not true, how comes it that the present scene is as it is? The defective and deficient should be disposed of and the internal economics of the state should be so arranged as to reach each remaining atom with not only the necessities of his life but all of the pleasures and developments and satisfactions open to any member of the state.

If I am to be told that this is a fantasy of the mind, a Plato's Republic, a More's Utopia, my reply is that nature is jammed with successful illustrations of the argument I present. In fact, I offer every living, functioning organism from the amoeba up to and including man himself—man the individual, the fly, the potato, the lion, Plato, Charles Darwin, and Mr. Rockefeller. For all either are or have been living and moving illustrations of an interior and closed state composed of harmoniously co-operating units or cells, each one of which has been and is in all existing bodies today, being carefully and continuously looked after by a central control. But this control is not here and now functioning in regard to man in his exterior organized-government form. Plainly in so far as his outer social and economic life is concerned, he is being left to his own devices. And as yet his own mental economy has not sufficed to effect a satisfactory social state for himself.

Either man needs to give serious and constructive thought to this or he should return to God in prayer. Until this happens his state will certainly remain just what it is now, an anachronism and a shame.

## THE GENTEEL TRADITION IN SEX

by BRANCH CABELL

An author may have his hobby: and should the demented fellow elect (as Keats has approximately phrased it) to sway about upon his hobby-horse and think it Pegasus, there is no great harm done. I do not know that upon the whole he is much happier for having this sort of equestrianism observed and applauded by the cognoscenti who collect books and esteem especially those first editions wherefrom has been removed no one of the misprints. I am sure that an author is often thrust into a most delicate predicament when he finds his books valued not only for their typographical errors but for still other qualities wherein he does not desire pre-eminence.

For do you but observe his plight! All courtesy is a draft to be honored in its own coinage. He could prefer, certainly, some compliment of a more congenial and more rational nature. Even so, the applause has a pleasant ring; and the applauder seems sincere. Not every one of us is ready in such circumstances to snub adulation, as did Wellington so perfectly, with the crisp reply, "Don't be a fool!" In fact, to make just that reply to a dissertation upon one's own genius would appear uncivil; and yet one really is tempted to make it, now and again, to the undesired disciple.

I voice this plaint because when some years ago the Society for the Suppression of Vice first brought me before the public as the writer of "an obscene and lewd and lascivious book," its well-meant endeavors established me in far too wide estimation as an approved pundit of pornography. The legend lives on, in astounding tenaciousness, without requiring any least further nurture; and I still suffer from the admirers thus attracted. This very morning, for example, I received a letter from yet another "book collector." After the customary encomia of my writings, which ordinarily bespeak the asking of a more or less unreasonable favor by return post, he requests me to select from my complete works "the most lively passage of an erotic nature" from which a drawing could be made to serve as his book plate.

It is not in the least his fault that, about the corners, my mouth is still faintly frothing. The man honestly intends a compliment; he writes too as a person of fair culture; and yet, somehow, to find my books regarded as a thesaurus of all fornications does not seem to me utterly complimentary. I have not ever learned to think of myself as a connoisseur of copulation: and when I receive, as I continue to receive, some dozen letters a month (the most of them from professed "book collectors") fiddling with this eternal stale theme, I do not love all my professed admirers. I love, rather, the first Duke of Wellington.

It would be well, I reflect, could these morons and young bitches take coition more quietly. I admit, though, that this task has always baffled Americans as a nation, and that American literature in especial has remained singularly unaffected by the persiflage of the drawing-room. That seems particularly true to-day when, under the lime-light of a perfervid and defiant "frankness," the genital organs are being put through their limited repertory in so very many quite inexplicably popular books. The shrill emphasis and the visible excitement of the author hereabouts (just as formerly did the abashed utterance and the virginally vague hints of the author hereabouts) really do lead you to surmise that his social advantages have, in either instance, been somewhat restricted. In neither instance, I mean, is it in the least the tone of the contemporaneous gentry, to whom these matters have always seemed merely amusing.

One encounters nowadays so many scathing dicta as to "the genteel tradition" in American letters that I rather hesitate to suggest that the true "genteel tradition" has at all times remained unrepresented there. I content myself with pointing out that the majority at any rate of our writers have been (to employ a quaintly old-fashioned term) not quite ladies and gentlemen. I say only that to speak of any sexual relationship has, I think, for this reason always flurried American writers, either to the extreme of regarding the matter as undiscussable, or to the other extreme of regarding coition as a very gravely important matter, such as well justified coarse speaking and a deal of heavy-handed sociology.

Yet all the while, I believe (but beyond doubt, during the last thirty-five years), their relatively civilized social betters, in unliterary drawing-rooms, have spoken of sex as a mildly pleasant joke and have continued to discuss its gymnastics in this particular aspect. Such, I can assure the literati, has for a long while been the attitude of the upper classes. That is the true "genteel tradition" as to all erotic matters; it is a tradition not yet represented in American letters; and it is also a tradition which causes me to fidget before those who gravely collect my books as erotica. I designed those books for quite other ends.

## SERVANTS OF GOD No. 1

Columbus, Ohio, Press Dispatch:

Following a dispute with his congregation due to a commercial broadcast of talkie reviews put on the air weekly by WAU, Rabbi Jacob Tarshish of Temple Israel has decided to quit the temple rabbinate and devote his entire time to broadcasting, principally reviews. The rabbi's programs contain brief reviews of current talkies and chatter on Hollywood. They are sponsored by a glass company.

## THE PINES AND THE BORERS

by LINCOLN STEFFENS

The pines of Carmel are dying and the twig-borers, who live on the trees, are troubled. They ask but they cannot tell one another what the matter is or what to do about it. They honestly do not know. Once, when they were convinced that casual conversation was a failure, they called a conference to examine deliberately and consider formally the pressing problem which to them and to the trees was a matter of life or death.

The delegates met in solemn session in one of the most populous, developed and depressed of the pines; they heard the wisest sayings of their best minds. In vain. These most practical of the troubled bugs blamed the trees and deplored their unresponsiveness to the borers' industry; they blamed the weather; they blamed the birds; they blamed the other insects who competed with the borers. But there was nothing to do about the birds and the weather, the other bugs or the trees themselves. The only comfort they gathered was from some despised theoretical delegates who observed that there were cycles of good times and bad times and who recalled that in the past other forests of pines with their borers had risen and fallen. The great majority and their leaders seized upon this great historical truth. It was fate and, therefore, might change. They must stand fast to meet together whatever came with faith and hope, courage, work and, above all, the stout-hearted among them must suppress the birds and other trouble-makers who wanted to ask all the time what it was that caused the cycles and the fate of pine-tree life.

The conference was about to quit when some idiotic birds discovered and lighted upon the swarming tree and sang or twittered a vacant refrain that sounded like

"You did it, you did it, you did it."

That broke up the conference. In confusion, haste and rage, the delegates appointed a fact-finding commission and adjourned.

The Editors are charmed to learn from Federico Vittore Nardelli's "L'Uomo Segreto" that Luigi Pirandello was faithful to his wife from January, 1894 to January, 1918.

## REQUIRED READING

"Why has Casanova attracted so little attention in English? So far as I know there is only Havellock Ellis's essay, and that does not go very far into the subject."—Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic*.

Required reading: Charles Whibley: *Literary Portraits*. London: 1904; Arthur Symonds: *Figures of Several Centuries*. London: 1916.

"In spite of his elegant lucidity, he [Anatole France] never made sense."—Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic*.

Required reading: M. Gaffiot: *Les Théories d'Anatole France sur l'organisation sociale de son temps*. Paris: 1928; Lewis Piaget Shanks: *Anatole France: the Mind and the Man*. New York: 1932.

"Creative writers continue to struggle with a grammar handed down to them by philologists of another age. There is an urgent need for revising the archaic rules which strangle expression to an intolerable degree."—Eugene Jolas in *transition*.

Required reading: Otto Jespersen: *Growth and Structure of the English Language*. Leipzig: 1905.

"transition believes in chthonian grammar."—Eugene Jolas in *transition*.

Required reading: George Philip Krapp: *The Knowledge of English*. New York: 1927.

"transition does not believe in the hoary imbecility of correct English."—Eugene Jolas in *transition*.

Required reading: Fowler's *Modern English Usage*. London: 1926.

"The new picture, 'Strange Interlude,' ought to be a success, and, with deep respect for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who produced it, I offer my best wishes. It was a difficult job, and, according to report, the difficulties are brilliantly overcome."—Gilbert Seldes in *The New York Evening Journal*.

Required reading: *New York Herald-Tribune*, *New York Evening Sun*, *New York Evening Post*, *World-Telegram*. Also, Eugene O'Neill: *Strange Interlude*. New York, 1928.

"He [Whitman] must be an expansionist à l'outrance, as Thoreau was a protestant à l'outrance."—Henry Seidel Canby in *Classical Americans*.

Required reading: Fowler's *Modern English Usage*. London: 1926. pp. 17 and 28.

"[Charles Louis] Philippe died 'before 1910' and this 'Bubu of Montparnasse' is presumably the first of his novels to be translated."—Robert Cantwell in *The New Republic*.

Required Reading: Charles Louis Philippe: *A Simple Story*. Translated by Agnes Kendrick Gray. New York, 1925. *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 15 February, 1910, special number devoted to Charles Louis Philippe.

## MEMORANDA ON MASKS

by EUGENIE O'NEILL

Not masks for all plays, naturally. Obviously not for plays conceived in purely realistic terms. But masks for certain types of plays, especially for the new modern play, as yet only dimly foreshadowed in a few groping specimens, but which must inevitably be written in the future. For I hold more and more surely to the conviction that the use of masks will be discovered eventually to be the freest solution of the modern dramatist's problem as to how—with the greatest possible dramatic clarity and economy of means—he can express those profound hidden conflicts of the mind which the probings of psychology continue to disclose to us. He must find some method to present this inner drama in his work, or confess himself incapable of portraying one of the most characteristic preoccupations and uniquely significant, spiritual impulses of his time. With his old—and more than a bit senile!—standby of realistic technique, he can do no more than, at best, obscurely hint at it through a realistically disguised surface symbolism, superficial and misleading. But that, while sufficiently beguiling to the sentimentally mystical, is hardly enough. A comprehensive expression is demanded here, a chance for eloquent presentation, a new form of drama projected from a fresh insight into the inner forces motivating the actions and reactions of men and women, (a new and truer characterization, in other words)—a drama of souls, and the adventures of "free wills," with the masks that govern them and constitute their fates.

For what, at bottom, is the new psychological insight into human cause and effect but a study in masks, an exercise in unmasking? Whether we think the attempted unmasking has been successful, or has only created for itself new masks, is of no importance here. What is valid, what is unquestionable, is that this insight has uncovered the mask, has impressed the idea of mask as a symbol of inner reality, upon all intelligent people of to-day; and I know they would welcome the use of masks in the theatre as a necessary, dramatically revealing, new convention, and not regard them as any "stunt" resurrection of archaic props.

This was strikingly demonstrated for me in practical experience by "The Great God Brown," which ran in New York for eight months, nearly all of that time in Broadway theatres—a play in which the use of masks was an integral part of the theme. There was some misunderstanding, of course. But so is there always misunderstanding in the case of every realistic play that attempts to express anything beyond what is contained in a human-interest newspaper story. In the main, however, "The Great God Brown" was accepted and appreciated by both critics and public—a fairly extensive public, as its run gives evidence.

I emphasize this play's success because the fact that a mask drama, the main values of which are psychological, mystical and abstract, could be played in New York for eight months, has always seemed to me a more significant proof of the deeply responsive possibilities in our public than anything that has happened in our modern theatre before or since.

Looked at from even the most practical standpoint of the practising playwright, the mask is dramatic in itself, *has always* been dramatic in itself, is a proven weapon of attack. At its best, it is more subtly, imaginatively, suggestively dramatic than any actor's face can ever be. Let anyone who doubts this study the Japanese Nô masks, or Chinese theatre masks, or African primitive masks—or right here in America the faces of the big marionettes Robert Edmond Jones made for the production of Stravinsky's "Edipus," or Benda's famous masks, or even photographs of them.

Dogma for the new masked drama.—One's outer life passes in a solitude haunted by the masks of others; one's inner life passes in a solitude hounded by the masks of oneself.

With masked mob a new type of play may be written in which the Mob as King, Hero, Villain, or Fool will be the main character.—The Great Democratic Play!

Why not give all future Classical revivals entirely in masks? "Hamlet," for example. Masks would liberate this play from its present confining status as exclusively a "star vehicle." We would be able to see the great drama we are now only privileged to read, to identify ourselves with the figure of Hamlet as a symbolic projection of a fate that is in each of us, instead of merely watching a star giving us his version of a great acting rôle. We would even be able to hear the sublime poetry as the innate expression of the spirit of the drama itself, instead of listening to it as realistic recitation—or ranting—by familiar actors.

Consider Goethe's "Faust," which, psychologically speaking, should be the closest to us of all the Classics. In producing this play, I would have Mephistopheles wearing the Mephistophelean mask of the face of Faust. For is not the whole of Goethe's truth for our time just that Mephistopheles and Faust are one and the same—*are* Faust?

## AMERICAN JURISPRUDENCE

Atlanta, Georgia, dispatch to the *New York Evening Post*: Clinton S. Carnes, who drew a five-year term for being short \$953,000 in accounts as Baptist Home Mission Board treasurer, awaits assignment following plea. In another cell at Fulton Tower is Robert Smith, Negro, sent up for four years for chicken stealing.

## WHEN I WANT A DRINK

by CLARENCE DARROW

Again we have with us the righteous, intent on taking the pleasure out of life: they who are against sin and sinners, and who can spot the wicked one as far as they can see or hear him, the sinner who seems happy. To the righteous sin and joy are the same, or, at least, close friends. No one who values heaven should have any bliss on earth.

One of the passions of the righteous is saving souls. Another in the field of enforced salvation is destroying saloons. The Anti-Saloon League, the W.C.T.U. and the Association for Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals of the Methodist Episcopal Church are raising objections again, making timid persons stop, look and listen. Possibly they may let an American citizen take a drink after awhile, or even sell one, but—the saloon must be abolished forever!

Now and then I want a drink. And when I want a drink I would like to walk into a suitable place and order it openly, decently, publicly, without whispering or pretending that I am doing something wicked. I don't care if the place is to be called a café, or restaurant, or something else. I have many gratifying memories of various places where friends and companions gathered and liquor was served and sipped while an agreeable feeling radiated through our bodies as we discussed the affairs of the community and the problems of life and death. All this is to be taken away even though somehow we may be allowed to take a drink.

If I am permitted to get liquor, how and where is it to be served? I have no intention of going into the business of making beverages; neither would I dream of selling the stuff. Like Omar Khayyam, "I wonder often what the vintners buy one half so precious as the stuff they sell."

In the old days I went to the saloon and found little to criticize in the place. To be sure, I picked my saloon, as I do my grocery and, somehow, I chose different saloons at different times to fit various moods, which is one of the advantages that I miss today.

What is a saloon anyhow? In America it is a place where liquor is sold to the consumer, usually to be absorbed on the premises. In the old days there were great differences in saloon-keepers as there were, and are, in restaurant-keepers, and politicians, and Christians. I object to the Anti-Saloon League and the W.C.T.U. and others reluctantly allowing me to have a drink, and then telling me where I may get it, and take it.

If I want a drink I don't want it for "medicinal purposes" any more than I want any other kind of "remedy" for what doesn't ail me; and I don't want it under the guise of "refreshments" either. When I want a drink I want it by its right name, and I want to go to a place that savors of my taste and thirst.

Why do I and others want a drink? I do not recall that I ever took a drink alone, unless for medicinal purposes, but I rarely take liquor or anything else for medicinal purposes. When I take a drink I take it for the same reason that a gathering of W.C.T.U. "ladies" take a drink of tea: for the stimulation and exhilaration that come from the cup that cheers. Even the W.C.T.U. members know that something invigorating adds to the enjoyment of a social occasion, and sharpens wits, if one has any.

I remember that elderly people in the town, when I was a young man, wagged their heads with concern and misgiving over what then was called a "still drinker," one whose main interest in drinking was not in connection with the desire for comradeship but only for the sake of imbibing regular stimulant without seeking any social element or value. A "still drinker" drank alone, and was in danger of filling an early grave. In the village where I lived, I remember one or two who were that kind of drinkers and they did go to their graves while young. They were buried alongside many of the "good" residents who died of hard on the liver caused by over-eating and other fatal disorders that obviously followed too much food; but this seemed to be a perfectly respectable finish for even a young person.

Imagine a Frenchman, or an Italian, or a German going out with a prescription and taking home a bottle of wine or beer and drinking it in silence and shame! In Europe, I stroll past the unclosed doors and uncurtained windows of what in America would be called saloons, seeing husbands, wives and their children at tables whose tops are checkerboards, or chess-boards, or plain card-game tops. They are sipping wine, or ale or other cheering concoctions from glasses and mugs, and are happy, sociable, sober and unafraid. In England, the "pub" is an institution, and is described in all sorts of literature, from Fielding to Hardy. The English, like the Americans, eat too much, and sometimes drink too much, and their climate, habits and sports have led to whiskey rather than wine and beer; but the Englishman insists upon his right to drink at home, or in hotels, or restaurants, or the "pub." Evidently it has not been necessary to abolish the saloon to protect or preserve anybody or anything in Europe. The Continent has no Puritans; the most bigoted of this species in England came to America where they, and they alone, found peace.

Sometimes I have occasion to go to Canada, and there, like most men, I visit what is called a "dispensary" immediately after taking a room at a hotel. I find no difficulty in getting what I want to drink, but am told at the "dispensary" to run straight back to my room without stopping along the way. Imagine a company of friends waiting to exchange greetings over a round of drinks having to send to a "dispensary" for something to be

(Continued on Page 4, Col 1)