

IF ROOSEVELT WINS

One of the most fascinating of women's organizations is the Conference on the Cause and Cure of War; it is amazing that adults should think that, by holding annual meetings where speeches are made and resolutions passed, either the cause or the cure of war can be discovered. Merciful heavens! If talk could stop war there would not be a man under arms in the world today. But the meetings do no harm, and the ladies think that by holding them they are doing something Constructive.

There is no movement today to repeal the nineteenth amendment, and probably there ought not to be. If the women have not made good on their promises to reconstruct our governments, if they have not unseated a single boss, if the record of women in office is unimpressive, if women vote just about as their

men tell them to vote, at least there is a chance, if only a chance, that some day they may take advantage of their civic opportunities and do something.

At any rate, the ladies do no harm, and some of them get a lot of fun out of politics; they feel grown up.

If the increase in the number of votes has increased the cost of elections, it is probably worth the difference to be rid of the suffragettes.

After a fair trial of sixteen years, it seems just to appraise women's suffrage as one of those reforms which, like the secret ballot, the corrupt-practices acts, the popular election of senators, and the direct primary, promised almost everything and accomplished almost nothing.



If Roosevelt Wins

by BESSIE UPTON BROWN

DEAR SISTER,

The leaves are turning here, and in a few days I shall be coming back to the city with the summer only a memory. I always dread the move, but this year especially, because of the political unpleasantness which will be agitating everybody until after November. And, even then, there is no assurance things will come back to normal, because while Mr. Landon is putting up a splendid fight (you should see how I *comb* the paper for favorable news) no one can be sure yet that Roosevelt won't win.

And if Roosevelt wins. . . .!

Well, my dear, I know there is no use in writing you about that possibility; you realize the danger we are in just as much as I do and, with your many contacts at the Club, probably are even better informed (yes, I am proud of the way I keep posted way up here in the mountains on national affairs) than I myself. But sometimes it just does one good to write down how one feels about a thing, and that is what I am doing now. Last night I began to think what would happen if that man is Presi-

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dent again, and — I tell you my dear — it was midnight before I closed my eyes.

I suppose it was because I had been talking after dinner with Mr. Capper (you remember that very good-looking man who was here last summer on vacation just after one of those Senate investigations in Washington; he was staying at the Lunds — his sister, you recall, married Alfred Lund's nephew, who is Vice President of the City Finance Corporation) — well, Mr. Capper certainly did draw a terrible picture of what he called the *budget situation*. It has always been so complicated to me, with all those millions and billions of dollars changing every six months — but Mr. Capper made it perfectly clear. He used as an example a seesaw (you remember the boards we used to rock up and down on at school) and he said that Roosevelt's budget is just like a seesaw when a very heavy girl sits on one end and a very light one sits on the other. Of course it tips dangerously down toward the heavy girl.

"Now," Mr. Capper said, "Roosevelt thinks he can balance the saw by forcing another girl to sit on the light side [he meant higher taxes of course], whereas any sane man would know that the real way to balance the saw was to make the heavy girl either step down or [and he laughed as he said this] reduce."

By that, of course, he didn't mean to stop all relief payments. Mr. Capper isn't that kind of a man. The poor are always with us, and of course we as good Americans are going to take care of our poor. But what he did say was (and I'm sure it's true, because just the other day a man who was tidying up around the place here stopped work because he thought he could get more from the village relief — of course, that's all done with federal money, your money, my dear, and my money) — what Mr. Capper did say was that, unless we have a real *bousecleaning* in relief, this country — the country you and I have grown up in and been proud of (yes, you remember even when our

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London friends used to laugh at “American push”) — this country, said Mr. Capper, is going to be in a terribly serious situation. What he called the “moral fiber” of its working masses is going to be sapped and undermined. And the people like you and me and Mr. Capper and the Lunds and, well, you know, the people who have always looked on their wealth and their position as a kind of trust to be used for the good of the less fortunate — we just aren’t going to be left with a roof over our heads or a coat to our backs. And our children and our children’s children will be paying the bills!

“But what can we do about it? Where can we go?” — that’s what I finally asked Mr. Capper. Yes, I came straight out and asked him that. And he looked rather embarrassed and didn’t seem to have a very ready answer. But last night, my dear, with that terrible picture of the seesaw going up and down, up and down, in my mind (I think I must have dreamed about the budget finally!) — last night I went over the various possibilities of what we might do if Roosevelt does get a second term. And at breakfast this morning I talked over some of them with Mr. Capper, who came over to my table for a few minutes to finish his after-breakfast cigarette. We had another good long talk together, and if it hadn’t been for a particularly objectionable young man who hangs around the hotel here and who came up and interrupted us it would have been altogether delightful.

Of course, the first place I thought of was England. The English are so sane and have so much common sense — so much middle-of-the-roadness, if you know what I mean. They haven’t tried any of our experiments, and Mr. Baldwin hasn’t pictured himself as a football quarterback. And yet they’ve been coming out of the depression all along. So, of course, I suggested England, especially as father thought that some of our money should *always* remain in English bonds. But Mr. Capper shook his head. “It won’t do,” he said; “England won’t do,” and when I asked him why not, he said — no, he almost whispered — “Estate taxes.” I had forgotten about those, but it seems that English taxes are even higher than ours here in America — even higher than that unconstitutional bill Roosevelt jammed through Congress at the last session. Of course, over there they

have a reason for their taxes, as Mr. Capper explained. They do have a dole for their relief, but the real reason for the taxes is to keep up a large enough navy to preserve world order. “An empire on which the sun never sets is bound to have a big public debt,” Mr. Capper explained. But even though that is the reason — and certainly it’s a good one — the fact remains that to move to England would not at this time in Mr. Capper’s view be what he calls “financially wise.”

“What about France?” I asked and I told him of the lovely summers we had had along the Brittany coast, but Mr. Capper shook his head at that too. “There is a man called Blum,” he said, “a Jew, who has just become Premier, and you can’t depend on Blum.” And then he went on to explain what I’ve only just seen in the headlines, how Blum has taken the Bank of France out of the hands of the old families of France who have run it so successfully for *centuries* and put it in the control of the government (just as Roosevelt is doing here, Mr. Capper pointed out) and how, when the French workers recently went on strike and literally seized the factories for themselves, how this Blum didn’t do his duty at all and put them out — the way Mr. Cleveland did in our father’s time when there was that Pullman strike out West — but just gave in to what the men wanted without even showing a bit of spunk or fight. “In a country like that,” said Mr. Capper, “I don’t believe your money would really be safe.”

Of course, I had to agree with him, especially, my dear, because our inheritance — and this is a peculiar thing I’ve been meaning to point out to you for some time — is considerably larger than I had imagined. I asked the Trust Company for a statement just the other day, and you really would be amazed to see how stocks have gone up in the last three years. Perhaps it’s what Mr. Capper calls inflation, but, whatever that may be, the fact remains that we are — it’s a vulgar word, and I hate to use it — well, yes, *richer* than we were three years ago. If we only could be sure now of a conservative administration — someone like Coolidge — what a blessing it would be!

But I’m drifting away from the point, because of course with all this federal money pouring out into relief and corruption we can’t expect too much this year. And so when Mr.

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Capper ruled out both France and England as places to go to — the countries I've always depended on, as it were — why I *was* at a loss. And it was just then that the young man whom I spoke of a few pages back (I really must wind up this letter) came up to Mr. Capper and said good morning. It seems he is a distant cousin or something of the kind and is studying law at Columbia. Mr. Capper said as a kind of joke — you know the way he does like a quiet jest — that we were trying to think of the safest country in Europe — the safest politically and, of course, the safest financially. Did he have any ideas on the subject? Well, you know youth always has ideas! I suppose it's the function of youth to have ideas. But this young man did seem to me particularly objectionable. For do you know what he said? He said — and he said it without so much as thinking — "Why not Russia?" Well, you can imagine how Mr. Capper reacted to that! And then he and this very objectionable young man got into a long argument about Russian bonds and redeeming gold and our devaluation, and how if one had bought Russian bonds in 1932 one would have kept all one's money safe and gotten seven per cent (yes, 7%) besides.

But the whole thing was just too ridiculous. I kept listening with one ear, of course, but all the time I was thinking over different countries we might go to in case we have to. Spain, Italy, Germany — I went over them all, and not one of them seemed particularly safe to me just now, until I suddenly thought of Switzerland. So I brought up Switzerland, and right away Mr. Capper and the young man seemed interested. Mr. Capper said that the Swiss were very sound men indeed. And the young man said that in troubled times Switzerland had always sheltered foreign people. Mr. Capper wondered if the French aristocracy hadn't gone there during the French Revolution and the Russian aristocracy during the Russian Revolution. The young man said he didn't know about that but he did know that a man called Lenin had gone there just before the Russian Revolution and that Switzerland had sheltered and protected him. And as he said that he winked at me!

Now, I suppose, my dear, that that young boy just thought he was being funny. But if there is one thing in the world I cannot stand, it is *winking*. And winking at a remark like

that! Mr. Capper thought it was going too far too. He cleared his throat — you know the way he does before he is about to give one of his brief talks. But the young man got up then and said he must go but wondered if Mr. Capper wouldn't play some golf that afternoon. Mr. Capper was just speechless, and the young man walked away not knowing, I suppose, how rude he really had been.

After that I turned to Mr. Capper and asked him straight out how he could explain that such a fine-looking young fellow — a cousin of his after all, although I must say that branch of the family never did measure up to the rest of the Cappers, socially I mean — could turn out so poorly. Mr. Capper said it must be the educational system. He said you simply can't find a school or college in the country that doesn't teach socialism or communism or some other kind of *ism* and that all this has come about — just as I would have expected — since Roosevelt has been President. Mr. Capper went on to give a regular talk on what he called "the disease of *isms*." I won't repeat the whole thing to you here, but the point is that the teaching of *isms* is entirely un-American and foreign. It has no place in our country at all, according to Mr. Capper, because what it does — and he was very emphatic about this — is to undermine all the patriotism and the fine old Americanism on which you and I — and Mr. Capper — were brought up.

And so, you see, that is the final reason why if Roosevelt wins you and I have simply got to do something — do something radical, I was about to say. Because, in addition to the reckless spending and the corruption and the budget and all the rest, this *ism* disease will go on spreading, until — as Mr. Capper says — "it will engulf and enmesh us all." All of us, that is, who aren't wise enough to pack our bags and trunks. That is why I'm so glad we've decided on a plan — you do agree, don't you? — because nowadays I think every individual should really plan ahead. Switzerland! — even though it did take in Lenin, which I can't really believe. I shouldn't be surprised if we can arrange our letters of credit as we did in the old days through Paris. And, of course — if Mr. Capper should happen to come along too — he can arrange for all those details.

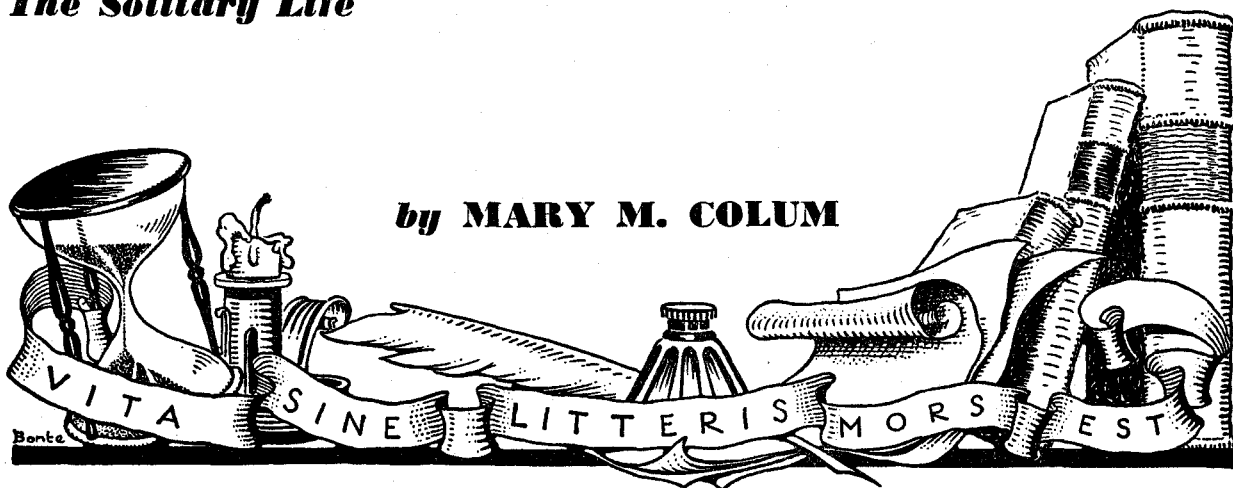
With love,

BESSIE

Life and Literature

The Solitary Life

by MARY M. COLUM



IN A CURIOUS way all the books before me, of the kind that is classified as nonfiction, either have a religious background or deal with religious experience or derivatives of religious experience. This is the case not only of Professor John MacMurray's *STRUCTURE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE* (Yale, \$1.50) and Helen Waddell's *DESERT FATHERS* (Holt, \$2.50) but even of such a book as H. G. Wells's *ANATOMY OF FRUSTRATION* (Macmillan, \$2.00), the product of a peculiarly secular mind, whose ideas of sin are founded on what might be called the biologically harmful, the hygienically harmful, or the sociologically harmful.

Religion, according to the dictionary, is a "belief binding the spiritual nature of man to a supernatural being . . . together with the feelings and practices which naturally flow from such a belief." However, this is not what religion means for Professor MacMurray or H. G. Wells. Religion, MacMurray says, is the "reflective aspect of a universal human experience, the experience of living in relation to one another. . . . The field of personal relationships is the field of religion." This does not differ greatly from Wells's conclusion uttered through his mouthpiece, Steele, in *The Anatomy of Frustration*. This personage, who represents the most up-to-date projection of Wells, considers that the rule of life should be self-identification with the whole of life.

That means in conduct that behavior is shaped so that its main conception is the co-operative rendering and development of experience and the progressive development in the whole race of a co-ordinated will to continue and to expand.

All very fine and practical, and MacMurray and Wells are both miracles of common sense, but they leave out one component of religion, and that is ecstasy. Ecstasy, whether common to all mankind or not or whether operating for the greatest good of the greatest number, is a necessary component of all high human experiences of whatever order. Some of the saints and some of Helen Waddell's desert fathers have left it on record that the ecstasy of religion is greater than that of all other kinds. Both Wells and Professor MacMurray have that common contemporary attitude of mind in dealing with religion; they are, as it were, grammarians of religion. *The Structure of Religious Experience* is a grammar of religion and has the same relation to religion that a grammar has to a book of high poetry; that is, it has a fundamental relation, a necessary relation but one that leaves out everything that has to do with height and depth.

Here is Professor MacMurray's fundamental:

All human co-operation is necessarily on a basis of mutual service which makes each of us a servant. Obviously this implies that each of us values all the others for themselves. We have to enter into fellowship with one another and so to create community.

This is undoubtedly a fundamental of all religions; and in another book before me, *MOHAMMED*, by Essad Bey (Longmans, Green, \$2.50), we will see that this fellowship with one another is as much a part of Mohammed's as of the Christian creed. But this fundamental idea by itself is at once both too high and too low for the human race: too high in that it de-