

God and the Gorillas

DALE KRAMER

ARTHUR BRISBANE, now 73 years old, is going along much the same as ever. Geese will say *too* much the same, but wiser men will consider the forests used in the printing of his columns, the barrels of ink spread upon the paper, the type set, and remember that all this has given employment.

Besides, there is reason to believe that in its helter-skelter this thoughtless generation has failed to digest the philosophy and teachings of the Highest Paid Editorial Writer in the World. Dr. Brisbane comes rather scattered out, of course, and as far as I can discover has never bothered to collect himself into a book. Probably hasn't time for it; certainly not now with a war on his hands, England butting in and only Mussolini and Father Coughlin to lend support. But there should be some place that bright-eyed journalism students can go for quick nourishment, something they can get in large, nutritious bites. And so, without a particularly prominent chin to stick out and having had all oratorical aspirations deflated by an expert on such things, I have endeavored to lend the philosopher aid by straining the soup and dishing up the meat.

The subject matter of Dr. Brisbane's writings can be divided into, roughly speaking, nine categories, namely: (1) Airplanes and how to use them, (2) Life, (3) Mussolini, (4) the Labor Unions are Running Things, (5) Economics, (6) Lynchings, Hangings, Executions and Head Choppings, (7) the Hereafter, (8) Science and (9) Gorillas. These headings are broad, but I feel the choice morsels below will convince the reader of their fitness.

Airplanes and How to Use Them. Dr. Brisbane's view of the importance of the flying machine may be gathered from the amount of space he allots it. In fact, it is no secret that he considers many of his opinions and statements of such importance as to bear repeating. For instance, he has recalled to our minds no less than half-a-dozen times recently that when Lord Northcliffe offered a prize of \$50,000 to the first flier spanning the English channel the task was considered so impossible that Lloyd's insured the offer for almost nothing. You can find a moral there. Yet it is true, unfortunately, that certain Boy Scout statesmen in Washington do not appreciate the importance of airplanes, particularly those of the bombing variety, a state of affairs of which Mr. Brisbane recently took cognizance when he spoke dolefully of "millions for unemployed, none for airplanes."

Even England knows how to better order things, having recently spent seven

billions on "warships, airplanes and other useful things." Mussolini, of course, is the boy who really knows airplanes, and consequently there is no stopping him, as Dr. Brisbane has pointed out. The correctness of this view may readily be seen from the revelation that one squadron of airplanes can destroy any European city in a very short time. Later—and despite the possibility of severe reproof for the disclosure of military secrets—Dr. Brisbane informs the world that London, Paris and New York are undefended against airplane attacks. It is true that we often hear patter of anti-aircraft guns halting air attacks and even of sending attack planes aloft to fight invaders, but our instructor has shown the ineffectiveness of such things where a real aviation expert is concerned. He simply ignores them. Yet war, despite the present dark picture, may become a thing of the past if only the world will stop its foolishness and give heed to Dr. Brisbane's remarkable peace plan. His proposal, announcement of which electrified the world on April 4, 1934, is simple in theory, as all great things are, and absolutely sure of success. Under it nations in disagreement would, instead of going to war, compete in Easter egg rolling contests.

Life. It is in the realm of Life itself that the depth and worthiness of the philosopher's thought becomes most apparent. While it is impossible to put Dr. Brisbane's views on the complex subject into one short paragraph, a few key notes can be struck. Probably the most ringing of all is the incisive statement that "man is a wonderful creature," a premise running throughout his entire work. But man has his blemishes, dark spots upon which our teacher mercilessly throws the white light of his thought. There are the nudists. Remembering that "one of the symptoms of insane people is a stripping off of the clothes," Dr. Brisbane must hesitate to vouch for the sanity of these people. And, worst of all, we find this business of going without clothes will result in the human body becoming again covered with short red hair (see Science). Consequently it is no surprise that our mentor must reject even half-way toleration of the "idiot nudists." "The Kentucky legislature, which passed a law making it a crime for nudists to cavort except behind high walls, was informed that its action would not protect heaven from offense." Pink toenails and the beauty patch have also aroused the splendid indignation of our master. But there are more optimistic moods when "men can do whatever they imagine and many things more," civilization is better than

starvation and "nothing is as beautiful or as encouraging as the faces of happy school children." Dance marathons are disgraceful, but when we compare them with burning people alive they do not seem so bad. Too, lest we become discouraged, we are told in Dr. Brisbane's own inimitable words that "there are always better days ahead."

And so it is that in the main his themes are calm, thoughtful and direct. We lack space for further exposition, but let us list for the reader's later contemplation a few aphorisms: "Everything has two sides." To illustrate this, Dr. Brisbane takes the case of a dog's ears. If you clip them, it hurts him; yet if you don't, some other dog may bite them. So there you are. Dorothy Dix's stand that "big, strong, silent men are rather useless" is endorsed. "The best occupation is thinking, but it is the most painful." "Never give up." "You need not pity a man who has lost his money if he still has his family." "Crime does not pay." "There is absolutely no time in which to begin anything worth while or to do better except now." "If you do your best, and have the stuff, the world will acknowledge your work." "What would we think if a herd of buffalo put a man into a pasture to fatten and eat, as we do the buffalo?" "Life is a kaleidoscope."

Mussolini. "Men believe that they think for themselves, but like wolves, what they want is a leader of the pack." With this thought Dr. Brisbane has prepared us for his proclamation that Mussolini not only is a "constructive dictator" but the "champion dictator of all time." He "knows how to get things done," looks well in a stove-pipe hat and it is impossible to talk compromise to a man like that. He builds his power on patriotism and trains children for war, a program which our mentor compares to the suckling of Romulus and Remus by the she-wolf. In fact, Dr. Brisbane feels so strongly about Mussolini's fascism that he wants 1,000 U.S. school teachers to visit "that wonderful country." We know, of course, that the roar of Mussolini's planes over Africa has stirred our master's fighting blood and brought into full play his military ability. And to Mussolini's greater glory it can be said that on the whole he has conducted the campaign in a manner satisfactory to Dr. Brisbane, although it is true that once or twice our instructor has found it necessary to administer sharp dressings down to the boy with the big jaw. But usually the fascist dictator is top notch. He shouldn't be grudging expansion, and will get it. Dr. Brisbane has said so from the first,



Scott Johnston

and repeatedly told Haile Selassie as much.

One of his first paragraphs on the Ethiopia-Italy dispute said Mussolini will get an indemnity because he is "that way." A little later Selassie was advised to come across with some cash, as well as salute the Italian flag, because "as a practical business man, Mussolini always demands a little soothing cash." In fact, he has had to treat Haile a little roughly, not so much because he is mad at him—though he deals harshly with the little ruler's claim of descendancy from Solomon—but because he is such a foolish fellow not to evacuate in favor of a *real* ruler. But such harsh words are infrequent and usually our teacher contents himself with a pleasant bit of bomb dropping, gas spraying and the like of that. Dr. Brisbane grants there is suffering among the Italian masses, but offers solace to Italian mothers by pointing out that meatless days, now that experiments have indicated starvation makes for intelligence, are really a good thing.

The Labor Unions Are Running Things. We have seen that few matters can stir the philosopher's wrath, but it might as well be stated right here that when it comes to the place where labor unions are taking advantage of the whole people he is for the people every time. Dr. Brisbane is tired of

the "dual government" which the working people use to exploit the employers and he wants something done about it. For instance, he warns union labor to watch out, else we shall have to come to something like Italy where "there are no labor unions collecting millions a year in dues." Former leaders are working with pick and shovel, a tractor or lathe, according to their mechanical ability." We have been told earlier that Mussolini would never stand for such shameful carryings on as strikes. For a while, it is true, he had some faith in Gen. Hoo Hoo Johnson, the N.R.A. administrator. When the coal code went into effect he hoped Johnson would make it work, for "of all industries, coal has been more seriously disturbed by strikes." But he recognized that unions might cause trouble by asserting a right to "overrule codes." In fact, on Oct. 12, 1933, it appeared to him that the Blue Eagle "may have to veto labor." But the N.R.A. was never very dependable, and instead of shattering the "invisible government" of labor unions it actually was used by these exploiters against the exploited, as when it attacked Henry Ford. Yet Mr. Ford valiantly whipped them off, and it may be noted here—I am sure it will not turn his head—that Dr. Brisbane coura-

geously stood by the persecuted auto maker through the thick of it. And it is all so useless in the "world's richest country with the courts to settle quarrels and unlimited power residing in the government," as well as "tanks of the U.S. army, strong enough to plow through brick walls," which are always to hand. The latter suggestion was made as San Francisco union labor struck "not at employers, but at the public." And so it is that "some rule [no strikes] will have to come." Dr. Brisbane informs us that workers are really "like horses and need a master to care for them."

We are also given an insight into subversive movements. A solution to the Communist problem has also been found—or at least the way pointed. After much research Dr. Brisbane has been able to show that "attractive girls not elected to sororities become communists." It appears that an investigation by W. R. Hearst of the Pi Phis, Tri Delts and Kappa Gammas would not be amiss.

Economics. While many an economist has succeeded in setting up a school of thought, Dr. Brisbane can boast *two* schools. They are: (1) The government should take a hand in our economic life, and (2) the government should *not* take a hand in our

economic life. It is well to pursue these two lines of thought separately. In the first we learn that "if anything is to be done, it must be done by one man with the right idea and the power to make others accept it." And, again, "it is time to make things happen instead of letting things shape themselves." In 1933 he said: "The government will presumably find a way to convince all citizens that when Uncle Sam takes charge all other management ceases to operate. Unless it does this, the N.R.A. will not get far." Once he told us enthusiastically how Josephus Daniels made a torpedo manufacturer come down four-fifths on his prices by threatening to take over his plant. On the other hand, "the best plan at present is to let every man get as much as his ability makes possible (he cannot take it to heaven), obliging him to use it legally, and exhorting him to use it generously." This country still believes in corner lots. "Industry only asks the administration to observe neutrality in the fight with foreign industry for control of world markets." "The U.S. is no longer a democracy."

But do not fool yourself by believing that Dr. Brisbane is sitting idly by amidst this "New Deal" regimentation. Not for a minute. He has a plan. A little story has been told by our instructor which, if taken to heart, will solve the whole thing. It appears there was once upon a time a tribe of American Indians whom a religious group conquered and attempted to "regiment." The Indians fought back by refusing to have children and died out. There is a lesson in that.

In 1933 he suggested that the army be deployed in a search for gold, but a foolish government paid no heed. The Mellons got their fortunes from "productive, constructive work." In putting Mrs. Sanger in her place, Dr. Brisbane points out that this country needs 50,000,000 more population to purchase second-hand automobiles. Science should not now disrupt a prosperous advertising business by discovery of an easy cure for pyorrhea. Russia is a fascist country and its "rulers" are likely to become multi-billionaires. "Don't kill initiative." Texas could feed the entire world. Reds and anarchists are having a fine time drinking beer on easy money from the rich, but "what will happen when the money runs out?"

Lynchings, Hangings, Executions and Head Choppings. While Dr. Brisbane's discourses on these subjects are not altogether original, his tremendous influence must be considered a chief factor in actions which result from them. Let us take as an example the double lynching in California which brought so much fame to the late Gov. Rolph. Immediately after the men were taken into custody Dr. Brisbane contented himself with a quotation, but his admirers can not doubt that it had much effect on events immediately following. "The late dowager empress of China," he reported ec-



statically, "believed in that theory [of prompt justice] and is supposed to have given the order: Execute the criminal at once, and see that he has a fair trial afterwards." However, our teacher is not in favor of promiscuous lynchings, as shown by his statement after the men had been hung naked to a tree. "One violation of law thoughtlessly approved may lead to others 1,000 times more dangerous, and should be remembered even when a lynching happens to please us."

Few, if any, executions escape him. Head choppings are favorites, particularly if done by hand. As he says, "a head chopped off by hand impresses us." Take this example. "The Hitler headsman, after striking the blow, leaves the ax buried in the block, pressing against the woman's neck for a few moments, pressing the great blood vessels for a few moments, making the beheading less bloody and unpleasant." Thus I think we may safely term our master a connoisseur of head chopping, as we can not help noting a great difference in appreciation between the above and a simple machine job, as "Van der Lubbe climbed silently to the guillotine platform. Goebbels pressed the button, Van der Lubbe's head was in a basket, half full of sawdust." I have been briefer than I should have liked, for it would be impossible to over-estimate the importance our teacher attaches to these occasions.

The Hereafter. While to the superficial observer it may appear that Dr. Brisbane is hesitant in his conclusions concerning the Hereafter, it is well to remember the difficulty involved in securing first-hand knowledge of the subject. However, he has been able to make a few positive announcements, such as that all murderers go to hell, that death-bed repentances are sometimes accepted, and that once a man gets to heaven he will be an equal of Socrates. But on the whole our instructor is less definite, usually concerning himself with thoughtful, stimulating questions. Once, in a period of doubt, he came to the conclusion that man has no such sure hope of eternity as a dog made into a rug. Yet he is aware that heaven

and hell make government easier, and that is something.

One of his most searching questions deals with the departure of the soul from the body. "When the heart stops and the body 'dies'," he asks, "does the soul start on its long journey, and then come back in case of sudden recovery, or does it wait a definite time before leaving to make sure?" You wonder about that. And you speculate with him whether Coolidge and Edison, gone to a better place, hear Coolidge's recorded voice broadcast by Mr. Hearst's radio station. Then we stop to ponder upon this: "Is there any moment of wondering while you are on your way, and doubting and hoping, as in this life? There in the grave you lie and your possessions have dwindled down to one small coffin and the clothes that the undertaker has put on you." And we wonder if the "graduates of our electric chair arrive as we send them out, with scars of electricity burning on their heads and faces." You merely ponder and can not for sure say "yes" or "no." But we learn that, at any rate, heaven must be a pretty classy place. For instance, "you could hardly imagine an angel named Tommy Smith."

Science. Probably our instructor's most original and far-reaching pronouncement in this field is what I have called his theory of the Unchangeability in Stature of the Human Being. Simplified, this is an explanation of why the average height and size of men and women remains about the same. This remarkable hypothesis was announced on March 5, 1933, when in speaking of midgets, Dr. Brisbane said: "These interesting creatures, big and little, remind circus goers of the goodness of providence that keeps human beings of the same normal size, making tall, thin men marry short, fat women and the other way around." However, we cannot be too sure that this state of affairs will continue. Short, fat women may become stubborn and repulse the advances of tall, thin men, or something, for our teacher has told us that "in days to come husbands three feet high may seem to women of that time like strange giants." And there is another worry. "Will women remain big in size to reproduce the race and men dwindle until they represent the 'parasite crab'?" Dr. Brisbane asks. "When you capture a parasite crab in deep sea weather it always is a female. You will find her husband under one of her flippers, where she keeps and nourishes him." Which may or may not please us. But the eminent scientist's most renowned investigations have been those concerned with the heavenly bodies. For instance, he has constantly and brilliantly set forth his belief that the sun, moon and stars are a great distance from the earth, a view never successfully disputed. And in the investigation of light years he is what might be termed, in the vernacular, a "daisy." I think one example will convince the reader. "Three hundred million light years is a long way. Mul-

tiplied the number of seconds in a year by 186 thousand, then multiplied the result by 300 millions and you have it, about six quadrillions of miles, plus 175 trillions, not allowing anything for the 300 million leap years." You will be awed by that.

But Dr. Brisbane does not confine himself. There are investigations which show that we used to walk on our hands and knees and were covered with reddish hair. In fact, red hair is a survival of primitive days and indicates power of character and, "like power to wiggle the ears and move the scalp, indicates power to resist processes of evolution." He has shown that "excessively hot drinks set up an irritation that, like any other constant irritation of the mucous membrane, is apt to produce cancer." Yet, despite these epochal studies he has found time to make innumerable homey suggestions, one of the most valuable being an exhortation to have police dogs psychoanalyzed if you are going to have them around.

Gorillas. It is hardly too much to say that our teacher is the foremost authority on Man vs. The Gorilla. He has concluded, after careful study of a vast amount of data, that a gorilla can whip a man any day of the week. The strength of his view may be gathered from the severe manner in which he castigated Heywood Broun when that writer foolishly stated in reporting the Carnera-Sharkey fight that the huge Italian might beat a gorilla. Firmly, but in a manner which must have made the author of *It Seems to Me* squirm, Dr. Brisbane wrote: "Mr. Broun's statement that Carnera might have beat a gorilla is not justified by anything in natural history or Du Chailieu's writings. A full grown red-haired gorilla of the Gaboon country, standing more than six feet high, on his short legs, measuring 80 to 100 inches around the chest, would destroy Carnera, Sharkey and Broun, all in three minutes. An orang-outang, no heavier than a lightweight boxer, would dispose of those

three big men easily." It may be noted that Broun has so far steadfastly refused to accept the master's challenge to engage an orang-outang in fisticuffs, in itself almost an admission of the foolishness of his statement. Later, when Carnera and Baer fought, our mentor wrote that "lest the ambitious young forget, it may be stated that if Carnera and Baer and any other two human fighters that ever lived, entered a ring with a full grown gorilla and made the gorilla angry, the four would not last." However, he has not yet stated whether Joe Louis would stand a chance with a gorilla. Probably, though, if we can judge from previous utterances, he would not. In fact, Dr. Brisbane has so convinced the world of the gorilla's prowess that Howard Brubaker, military expert for The New Yorker, recently gave it as his judgment that the famous editorial writer could with the aid of one gorilla and a bombing plane effectively conquer Ethiopia in a few weeks.

They Killed My Son

HARRISON GEORGE

IT WAS night before I read the terrible news. How, that morning, in Rio de Janeiro, Luis Carlos Prestes had been seized by the white terror. The bestial police assassins of Getulio Vargas. My son, Victor Barron, dead. My own son, regardless of some idiotic court that, when still a child, gave him another name. That lost him from me for long years.

But not forever. Out of the West, from the skid-road of Seattle, he came to me in 1931. A lanky lad. A real proletarian. A lumber-jack at sixteen. Doing a man's work for a boy's wage. Unable, finally, to find such a job. Conscious of the bitter wrongs suffered by his class. A brilliant mind thirsty for knowledge of the way out. Demanding answers to countless questions. Devouring books with eager passion. But, again the mutations of life. Again, separation. Now, he is dead. Murdered by the Brazilian police. Of course, the police tale is that my son "committed suicide." Political prisoners in Brazil always "commit suicide" or are "killed by their followers." In that same Police Headquarters where my son met death, a man named Niemeyer "committed suicide" some time ago. When popular outcry at long last forced an open hearing, it was proven that the police murdered him. In the case of my son, the tale of "suicide" served a double aim: to cover up his murder by the police and to conceal—by accusing the murdered boy—the real police informer who disclosed Prestes to the police.

Would you have corroborative evidence from impeccable authority? Then scan the following excerpts from the speech of Abel Chermont, member of the Federal Senate of

Brazil from the State of Parana, delivered to that body under the shelter of parliamentary immunity and printed in The Imparcial of Rio de Janeiro dated March 4, 1936:

The Captain Jose de Medeiros, after arrest by the police, has been found dead in the Vista Chineza [in the heart of Rio]. His body filled with bullets. His hands and feet broken and crushed, with 23 wounds of different degrees. His body was found in the same place where, some time ago, was also found dead the unfortunate student, Tobias Warschawski—a few days previously arrested by the police. As it happened in the Warschawski case, the police have issued a statement declaring that Captain Medeiros was killed by his followers. . . . Captain Medeiros, the soldier Absgardo Martins; two crimes, two assassinations under the State of Siege, for which assassinations I accuse the police in whose hands they were.

In the hands of these police assassins now is Luis Carlos Prestes, adding to the 17,000 persons already thrown into prison under the State of Siege. A magnificent personality for whom there is no comparison in American history, a soldier who rebelled against command to oppress the people, Prestes became the idol of the masses when, from 1924 to 1926, he led the famed "Prestes Column" of mutinous troops in an armed campaign for popular rights. He is a legendary figure that led his command now here, now there, throughout Brazil's vast dimensions. Finally forced to flee across the frontier, Prestes remained the "Knight of Hope" to the millions of his oppressed countrymen.

In those years Brazil was ruled by "President" Washington Luis, a puppet of British imperialism, with vast plantations, railways and other interests in Brazil which reach the

sum of 287,306,750 pounds sterling. Against the British, seeking political influence, trade favors and vast concessions, American imperialism, with some \$500,000,000 invested, intrigues with corrupt Brazilian political cliques. The big Wall Street investors are: The Electric Bond and Share Company, the Standard Oil of New Jersey, the Texas Corporation, the United States Steel (controlling important manganese mines), the American Smelting Company, Armour and Company with great packing houses.

Henry Ford holds a vast concession—for rubber—a feudal realm called "Fordlandia" of 3,700,000 acres on the Tapajos river, with extra-territorial rights of sovereignty for Ford which excludes the operation of Brazilian law within his domain. There, for luckless thousands of Negroes and Indians, "Ford wages" means a top wage of 12 cents per day, from which they must buy supplies at company stores. Under such imperialist exploiters, whose rule is enforced with the police whip and military bayonet of this or that Brazilian tyrant who can seize the title of "President of the Republic," live the great majority of 43,000,000 people. The Department of Overseas Trade of Great Britain, never accused of sentimentality, in a report on Economic Conditions in Brazil, has said: "The inhabitants are living, in many cases, in a serfdom not differing much from that of medieval times."

In 1920, the present "President," Getulio Vargas and the present Brazilian Ambassador to Washington, Oswaldo Aranha, organized the successful *coup d'etat* which, with armed force, established the present regime. At that time, both Vargas and Aranha were