

considerable alteration, one-third is original—created.”

The emotional appeal of a book or play adapted for the movies is much weaker than the emotional appeal of an original “movie” play. Compare an ordinary short film, written especially for the screen, with the photo-play version of some famous novel which you have not read. (In case you have read it, a fair judgment will be difficult, because associations and memories give the film a certain extrinsic value.) There will be no question—the frank “movie” play will be remembered long after the tedious episodic feature film is forgotten. In these cases where the adaptation is highly interesting you will find that the first model has undergone a marvelous change. I know how surprised I was when I first realized this, but persistent questionings about others’ experiences with the “movies” brought confirmation. It would seem then that moving pictures will develop, aesthetically and every other way, in proportion as they confine themselves to their own particular field of pantomimic narrative, flung against suggestive and beautiful backgrounds. They will develop in the degree that they cease imitating other arts and formulate an art of their own.

The key to such development lies in the hands of the director. With the introduction of well-known actors and actresses to the camera the histrionic standard of the “movies” has been raised immeasurably in the last three years. Gone are the

old nervous fidgeting, the exaggerated emphasis, the perpetual restlessness; the value of restraint has been learned, together with the imaginative power of quiet methods, the force of few gestures. Furthermore, the enormous financial development of moving pictures has permitted the commandeering of the talent of some of our ablest fiction writers for the “movies.” Yet the real power for development is not in actor or author, it is in the director. The welding together of story, acting, scene, the selection of detail, the moulding and shaping of incident, are all essentially his. Therefore it is good to learn that effort and money are more and more being devoted to acquiring imaginative men for directors. On them and no one else rests the future of moving pictures.

On us, as outsiders, rests the duty of dignifying his profession. To encourage our young men of imagination and culture, of aesthetic sensibilities, to go into the work of directing the production of moving pictures is merely to be wise before the event. There seems reason to believe that the new severity of competition for popularity in moving pictures may in time automatically bring about this already perceptible change for the better in the calibre of directors. But we shall lose nothing and gain much if quite consciously we help to hasten a progress which without our attention or our interest may well be fumbling and feeble and discouragingly slow.

HAROLD STEARNS.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ibsen and Father Daly

SIR: The only fair way to criticize a literary critic is on a literary issue: i. e., a question of right perception of another’s meaning. It is here that I venture to question your interpretation of the word “preoccupation” in your (mainly) fair and just strictures on the viewpoint of Father Daly as to Ibsen-reading in *THE NEW REPUBLIC* for August 28th. I must ask you first to concede that priesthood is a trade, like plumbing, or analyzing Aramaic—Greek roots. There is a class-consciousness among priests, whether Roman, Greek or Anglican (as among competing physicians). In short, being a priest, I happen to know what Father Daly meant better than do you, who know so many other things better than either of us.

Ibsen was “preoccupied” with the “animal side of man” for the precise reason that Homer wasn’t—because, in his life, it did not have its normal and rightful place. He was frail and chronically neurasthenic. His Puritanism forbade him to live a complete life, emotionally. And his religion was that nineteenth century individualism which thinned the word “spiritual” into an essence which was quite without human grit and meaning. So Ibsen was “preoccupied” with the physical like many a modern and

ancient ascetic, for the very reason that he tried to put it out of his life. (One finds traces of the same thing in Tennyson, Pater, and others among the Victorian “Sons of Anak”). If you read de Maupassant’s “The Coward” carefully, you can discern in it the same kind of “preoccupation” with “the future life.” (Your random shot hit true.) The fear of death—and doubt of a hereafter is the only rational and real reason for any one’s fearing death—runs like a sombre monochord through all his brilliant stories, even the quite earthly “Bel-Ami.” What a man tries to evade gets into his work when he writes, just as what a penitent tries to suppress, psychologically is sure to come out in confession. And it is just because Father Daly has had that experience (an occupational disease if you like!), that he uses “preoccupied” in this “back of the mind” sense. It was good for Ibsen to rid his consciousness of that preoccupation. He might have ranked rather nearer Homer, with no loss of his scientific temper, had he merely gone to confession. Which, of course, will be merely a rare joke in the office of *THE NEW REPUBLIC*.

I don’t know about Lucifer. He seems more like the “Anointed Kaiser” and the twentieth century to me, despite Mr. Alfred Kerr. Ibsen was too sad to be the modern

evangel of revolt. And the new liberation must be more joyous, as well as relentlessly rational, than the old tyrannies, if it is to get nearer to the heart of the times than does Father Daly and the medievalism he represents.

It is certain that (Roman) "Catholic girls will read" your assemblage of worthies—all but Freud and Strindberg are of the Ibsen nineteenth century period, by the way—just as their feminist ancestresses of the Renaissance read the Heptameron. But the modern girl of whatever faith, except perhaps, a negative positivism will mainly laugh at them—or, more likely find them dull. All but Anatole France, whose wit may save him. The trouble with Father Daly is that he is a "grown-up" priest. It is the whole trouble with his order.

Should your curiosity be at all piqued by my apparent mingling of viewpoints, may I add that I am an Anglican Modernist who is mainly amazed, in enjoying THE NEW REPUBLIC, at its tacit assumption that what you assail as "medieval ecclesiasticism" is in any sense the Christian religion, or even historic Catholicism. You should read your George Tyrrell to better purpose. Or are you "bronze giants," perhaps, "preoccupied," too, in Father Daly's meaning, with a false concept of the historic Christ?

WALLACE HERBERT BLAKE.

Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Messrs. Angell and Usher

SIR: Mr. Usher has said that we can't adopt Norman Angell's "new kind of war" even if we want to; now Mr. Patten says that we ought not to want to adopt it even if we can. His letter to THE NEW REPUBLIC meets Mr. Angell's argument obliquely—perhaps because the argument itself was not clearly understood. Mr. Patten talks of the morality and possible advantage of yielding temporarily to Germany. Norman Angell's proposition is in the nature of an hypothesis wherein the advisability of going to war has been assumed. In other words, the emphasis is not on the counsel, "Go to war with Germany," but on the question, "If you desire to go to war with Germany, why not pursue this kind of warfare?" In fact, the words "any country" might be substituted for Germany and the article lose none of its force.

The question which Mr. Patten raises is one which, of course, should not be lightly passed over. Should a country ever yield, even temporarily, in matters involving fundamental principles? Should justice and humanity and honor ever be temporized with? This is, fortunately, still an open question, for to many it has seemed too ironical to send men to slaughter for the sake of justice and humanity.

Norman Angell proposes a boycott of an offending nation or nations arranged by agreement with their enemies. Mr. Patten objects that this is not open and honest. Why not? It is to be openly declared. Let us look closer and see just what is proposed. In any war all trade and communication is stopped between the belligerent countries; war at present means boycott plus slaughter. Mr. Angell proposes boycott alone, worked out on a larger scale. It cannot be contrary to "warriors' morality," since it is already used by warriors. It does not involve injuring a nation when its attention is turned toward other foes, for the country adopting the plan would, naturally, have become a foe.

To most of us the warriors' standard of morality, as understood to-day, is a negligible quantity. It seems to condone Zeppelin attacks by night, fighting with machine

guns and submarine warfare—none of them particularly open and honest. It is just because we scarcely care to descend so low that we approve of Norman Angell's scheme.

The real objection to it is on the ground of its impracticability, and that question has already been sufficiently discussed in these pages. One might conceivably add the objection that the two parts of Mr. Angell's doctrine do not go well together. He has maintained that war is not profitable because trade and industry are controlled not by nations, but by international groups of individuals. Yet his new kind of war presupposes a vast increase in national control of commerce, finance, etc. We must grant, however, that such control is not unusual in war time or absolutely impossible at any time.

The real advantage of the plan is that in it may be contained the germ of something bigger—perhaps of a union of the more important nations to keep peace and enforce it by concerted action. It will be a good thing for civilization and for morality if such action may involve a boycott of an aggressive nation rather than the killing of her best citizens.

HARRIET FOX WHICHER.

New York City.

Germany's Precarious Future

SIR: It seems to me that the author of the article on "Germany's Financial Resources" in THE NEW REPUBLIC of September 4th decides the case without considering all the facts. Moreover, the facts which he omits were controlling facts.

It sounds plausible to say that if fifteen million British could easily support a debt of four billion dollars in 1815, seventy million Germans should be able to take care of seventeen billions in 1920, but the deduction is unsound.

Many elements entered into the success of the Allies in 1814-1815; but the most potent influence was the financial strength of Great Britain and the corresponding weakness of France and her dependent states. Fifteen millions carried with ease the burden which forty millions carried with difficulty in spite of continuous victory on land. Why? Because Great Britain maintained an effective blockade of the Continent, and France was never able to make her retaliatory measures effective.

As a consequence, the export trade of Great Britain grew by leaps and bounds. She captured one market after another until she controlled the business of the world. The trade of France languished. Even after an impressive triumph like Austerlitz, the first concern of the emperor was to meet panic conditions in Paris. The merchant fleet of France was shut up in French ports; that of Great Britain sailed every sea, and was safe except when our own men-of-war and privateers were busy in 1812-1815.

To-day Great Britain occupies the same position as in 1800-1815. On the other hand, Germany is in a situation akin to that of France under Napoleon I. Her merchant fleet is captured or shut up in port. Her export trade is paralyzed. Her railroads and public utilities must be operating without profit. Her mercantile classes are being pushed to the wall. In the light of these facts I think that the conclusion of the article on "Germany's Financial Resources" should be revised, for should such conditions continue until 1920—or, indeed, for a much shorter period—it is impossible to see anything but ruin ahead for Germany.

THOMAS ROBINS.

Tuxedo Park, N. Y.

New Music in America

SIR: In a recent issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC, Mr. H. K. Moderwell has written an article on so-called "Futurist Music," in which he says that American audiences have had practically no chance to hear this modern music, and that men like Stravinsky and Ravel "are heard here only at small, inquisitive gatherings of amateurs."

I think that Mr. Moderwell is somewhat mistaken in this statement, as Mr. Walter Damrosch, in his regular series of New York Symphony Society concerts, has produced many works of Stravinsky and Ravel, and also performed Sibelius' Fourth Symphony for the first time in America. A few of these ultra-modern compositions performed by him last season were:

"Daphnis and Chloe," by Ravel; "Le Festin l'Araignée," by Roussel; "Le joli jeu de Furet," by Roger Ducasse; "Islamey," by Bálákirew.

This seems to me to prove conclusively that in New York, at least, the public are given many opportunities of becoming acquainted with new developments in music that are worth while. This is true to-day and has been true in the past, as such men as Wagner, Brahms, Tchaikowsky, Di Qudy, Debussy, and many others, received the first performances of their works outside their native countries in the concerts of the New York Symphony Society and other similar organizations.

ALICE DAMROSCH PENNINGTON.

East Setauket, N. Y.

[The correspondent seems to have misjudged the tone of my article. I was by no means implying that American audiences are denied the opportunity of hearing new music or that influential conductors and artists in this country are narrow in their tastes. The Stravinsky piece which the correspondent refers to was "Fireworks," unless I am mistaken, and this being in his early manner can hardly be called "futuristic." Neither can "Le Festin de l'Araignée," nor, I should think, the Ducasse piece. In my article, the term "futurist music" was considerably narrowed. But it was an omission not to mention Mr. Damrosch's performance of "Daphnis and Chloe," and I should be glad to have the correction made in the pages of THE NEW REPUBLIC. I was not, of course, attempting an exact or exhaustive listing, but I am sorry if I should have seemed to be withholding due credit from Mr. Damrosch and other conductors who have been influential in keeping American concert programs to a high and catholic standard.

H. K. M.]

Wider Significance of Suffrage

SIR: In a recent issue of a popular periodical there appears from the pen of a gentleman distinguished alike for his personal charm and for his political vicissitude, an article in which, with smoothly flowing style and a mildly subversive tolerance, he solves the question of woman suffrage.

To the true feminist the agitation for woman suffrage is but the surface indication of a deeper movement which is frequently not apprehended even by its advocates. This less obvious motive toward the fuller individualization of woman is inextricably bound to and limited by the progress of a larger tendency of which it is but a part. The fuller life and the nobler form of man, in the generic, toward which this movement urges may perhaps be attained as the fruition of more highly collective forms of society. As to the suffrage movement itself, however, the chief value seems to lie in its educational reaction on its advocates and adherents. Many increases in points of human con-

tact result, naturally, from the formation of this new social aggregate—the suffrage party. To the independent and self-supporting woman this increase of social complexity gives wider aspects and a greater feeling of social solidarity. For the married woman there is frequently an awakening from the unconscious and unintentional mental or spiritual subjection to the male who may be her main source of information as to the broader world about her. Education, breadth of human understanding, an increased group consciousness, and a lessening of individual authority are the justifying fruits of the movement. The victories of the suffragists are therefore to be looked upon as of sentimental value, largely, in that they indicate progress. Despite the arguments of agitators or the popular opinion of their foremost opponents, these victories should not be read as promising immediate radical improvement in social forms or in economic life. Such changes are not directly conditioned upon the progress of suffragism, but must await, upon the part of the larger group of both sexes, that social education and awakening for which woman suffrage can lay only a portion of the foundation.

Such a *reductio ad absurdum* as Mr. Taft reaches by assuming that women wish the vote as an inalienable right inseparable from citizenship, and then concluding that "on such a theory the suffrage should be extended to children and babes in arms," may be justified only as the device of a debater.

But it is not his attitude toward woman suffrage that has impelled the writer to cry aloud from printed pages, so much as his use of such terms as "inalienable right," "inexorable law of economics," and "millennial legislation." It is an inexorable law of economics that each child born into the world has an inalienable right to such handicaps of physical and mental, nurture and training as may correspond to his parents' estate. In the city of Washington a certain coal company displays in its window a picture of some breaker boys at work. The psychology of its advertising is not immediately evident; it may intend to show what Ruskin called the "dearness" of its product, or it may be an appeal to the public to contribute through its purchases toward the support and training of the bodies and minds of future citizens. The price of the product is, of course, partially determined by the demand for coal and by the supply of boys. To attempt by legislation to offer such boys food for bodies and minds would, in popular business parlance, be termed "millennial legislation," if it might not justly be designated by that more scathing word, "socialistic." To pursue further this one of the many possible illustrations, it may be said, in Mr. Taft's words, that these boys should not be taught "to look to the public treasury for support," but rather at the breakers for slate, lest "thrift and saving be discouraged" and "independence and strength of character be destroyed."

The "radical" movement for the elimination from our social system of the waste, whether of life and spirit or of material wealth—the movement for the enlargement of individual life and opportunity—will go forward, for the cause is deeper than the laws of an existing economic system and lies in the souls of men. But education must precede; not our present education of facts and definitions, but one of ideas and motives. For their service in preparing women for their share in this progress, the race may well be grateful to those illogical advocates of suffrage whose arguments fall so readily before Mr. Taft's trained pen.

JOHN MILLS.

Wyoming, N. J.

After the Play

DOES "Hit-the-Trail Holliday," at the Astor Theatre, increase our knowledge of George M. Cohan? A little. We all knew Mr. Cohan for a man capable of laughing at himself. See, for example, "The Seven Keys to Baldpate." From "Hit-the-Trail Holliday" we learn that those traits in himself which he is willing to laugh at are more numerous than we had supposed. He has been again and again reproached with his fondness for waving the American flag and singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Between the first and second acts of his new play there has been a temperance meeting at Johnsbury, somewhere in New England. The success of the meeting was a speech made by Billy Holliday, a New York barkeeper. At the beginning of act second Mrs. Temple tells us all about Holliday's triumph, how he silenced the rowdies sent there to break up the meeting by waving an American flag, how he taught some of his auditors to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Lord, Lord, we say to ourselves, Mr. Cohan has gone and done it again. It's in his blood. He will never get well. But wait a minute. At the end of act second the entire police force of Johnsbury comes on the scene. The chief of police explains—they want to show Holliday how well they have learned to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Holliday groans. Everybody except the policemen flies a signal of distress. The curtain cuts off the song and the audience roars. See also, if you want another example of Mr. Cohan's self-criticism, the speeches in which Holliday lays down the law that the best kind of advertising is man-to-man praise.

Never, so far as I can remember, did a play by Clyde Fitch or Charles Klein flood me with curiosity about its author. I have never seen a Cohan play without being eager to know what Mr. Cohan is like. When I can't get additions to knowledge I am grateful even for confirmations. As, for example, in "Hit-the-Trail Holliday," for signs that Mr. Cohan's gift for saying things in concrete words is as exuberant as ever. The person most surprised by the success of Holliday, temperance orator, is Holliday, barkeeper. He is caught in an avalanche of offers from temperance societies, breweries, moving picture companies, magazines. He expects to wake up and find he has been—dreaming, you would say, and so should I, but Mr. Cohan doesn't. Holliday declares: "I still expect the colored porter to come and tell me we'll be in in ten or fifteen minutes." Mr. Cohan abounds in speeches like this. Placed where he places them, spoken as Mr. Fred Niblo speaks them, they seldom fail to "register."

In what form "Hit-the-Trail Holliday" was suggested to Mr. Cohan by Mr. George Middleton and Mr. Guy Bolton, I don't happen to know. This ignorance does not matter, for much of the play is obviously Mr. Cohan's own. His is the power to write a farce which was partly suggested by Billy Sunday and which isn't and wasn't intended to be either a criticism of Billy Sunday or a representative of his character. To Mr. Cohan, too, we may safely attribute the special flavoring of this farce, which tells how a barkeeper happened by accident to turn temperance orator, and by his transformation to make a lot of money for himself and his friends, and a good deal of money for his enemies. "Hit-the-Trail Holliday" is both a temperance farce, if you like, and also a get-rich-quick farce, and it suggests on the author's part no faintest disapproval or approval of either temperance or getting-rich-quick. Very curious and special, this ability to sug-

gest nothing at all, and the very opposite of inability to suggest anything. Curious too is Mr. Cohan's gift for making barbers, errand boys, and expressmen funny by making them look like the most familiar types and talk like individuals. The blank spaces in his new play come when he hasn't taken the trouble to imagine one of his persons distinctly, as in the case of Mrs. Temple, a Johnsbury widow, very colorless.

A play by Mr. Cohan always starts one wondering about the nature of the "gift," the famous old inexplicable and incommunicable special gift for the stage. Suppose you had Mr. Cohan's humor, eye for the surface of character, invention, store of appropriate words, high spirits, deep frivolity—even so your plays might fail as often as his succeed. Suppose you had learned about playwriting everything that can be taught. Suppose you realized the importance of preparation and contrast and surprise and the clash of wills. Even then your plays might lack the only thing which would make your other talents and your knowledge count in the theatre. Just as a historian, who can explain most lucidly why what happened did happen, who can deduce the present from the past, and the past from the remoter past, but cannot for the life of him deduce the future from the present; so a man who knows how plays ought to be written, and who has invention and observation and whatever else you please, cannot turn his gifts and his knowledge to account unless he has also the one special gift, as special as the batting eye.

In Mr. Cohan's case the gift for making all his other gifts count double on the stage has nothing to do with a habit of emphasis. He is so far from being uniformly and mechanically emphatic that some of his neatest technical bits are almost like bits of coarse genre painting, and others are the quietest asides. What Mr. Cohan has is a power of imagining moments when what you are looking at is heightened by what you know, when what you hear is heightened by what you see, when what you see and hear and know is heightened by what you expect. Which is of course only another way of saying that his is also the power of arranging such moments in such a procession that each is heightened by its placing. Naturally I don't offer this or anything else as a definition of "the gift," which nobody has succeeded in defining. I am willing to assert, however, that the gift just credited to Mr. Cohan resembles "the gift" in this, that it is certainly a gift from the gods, not otherwise communicable, and that it is probably a reflex, that its possessor uses it without quite knowing what he is about. "I saw her starting to break," said Mr. T. Franklin Baker of the ball he hit for one of his most notorious home runs, "and I busted her."

Is it true that Mr. Cohan is vulgar? Perhaps. But the only part of his vulgarity that could profitably be removed is his callousness. Mr. Cohan and I are equally pleased when Holliday pulls the blustering, bullying Dean Granger's nose. Mr. Cohan's pleasure is greater than mine in the subsequent conduct of Holliday, who from time to time through the rest of the play taunts the coward with his cowardice. But were this callousness removed the general frivolity might go too, and frivolity is one of Mr. Cohan's qualities. No, the only change I'd make in Mr. Cohan, were I his creator, would be to give him an acuter interest in politics, a longing to represent on the stage the concrete queernesses of Mr. Bryan, say, or Colonel Roosevelt, or Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard.

Q. K.