

only in the sense that they are never timely. Nobody wants them except the people who cannot think of anything else. "The soldiers are coming home," says Mayor Hylan, "go to, let us make an arch." And so they made an arch. No enquiry apparently why there should be an arch except that there is to be a procession, and soldiers marching in a procession apparently need an arch to march through, as equestriennes in a circus need a hoop to jump through. A little cause for gratitude there is, in that the hoop is not permanent. Let us hope that its permanent successor, if there is one on the way, will be permanently halted in its creator's brain.

The obviously sensible course to have taken was very different from the actual method of "habitual inspiration." It would have required the recognition of the real conditions. Here we are in twentieth century America. More accurately to the geographical fact we are in New York City. Soldiers are coming home from a victorious campaign. We need some action that applies to this situation. They are not Roman legions nor are they the battalions of Napoleon. They are not returning to an ancient city where every person can understand the symbolism of the arch and gate. Here in New York not one person in ten thousand does. If art today can do no better in commemoration of the greatest happening of our time than to put up a large and highly decorated hoop, it may be fairly reckoned bankrupt. The question is insistent. What's the answer?

LEO STEIN.

More Educational Inquisition

VIEWED in itself, the case of Miss Gertrude Pignol, dismissed for disloyalty from the Manual Training High School of Brooklyn, is a small matter in this time of large affairs. It was Miss Pignol's misfortune to be of German birth. It was her further misfortune to be too sincere and straightforward to disavow before her inquisitors the pain she experienced when the two countries she loved found themselves engaged in desperate war. She has been deprived of her living, but that is something that has happened to thousands in analogous circumstances. Where her case is significant is in the light it sheds upon the spirit that animates our educational bureaucracy.

The facts in the case are simple enough. Prior to our entry into the war Miss Pignol's sympathies were with Germany. There is no indication in the evidence upon which she was condemned that she ever prostituted her official position to the foment-

ing of pro-German spirit among her students or colleagues. But after America broke with Germany there was a lot of tittle-tattle among the other teachers in the school, intended to show that she could not be truly loyal to America. One teacher dug out of her hazy memory a statement alleged to have been made by Miss Pignol eleven years ago that she would be ashamed to be an American citizen—a statement most improbable in view of Miss Pignol's admiration for democratic institutions. Another recalled that at about the time of the Lusitania sinking Miss Pignol had tried to dissuade a German woman from returning to Germany to eat up the Germans' food. A third had heard Miss Pignol say that the press accounts of German outrages were biased; a fourth floated a dubious tale that Miss Pignol had refused to sign a food card. Miss Pignol, it was recalled, had objected to the posting by the librarian of a cartoon of the Kaiser in the days of our neutrality; she had cried when she was asked to subscribe to the Red Cross funds and had admitted that the slaughters of the war overwhelmed her with unhappiness. It was rumored that she had not stood while the Star Spangled Banner was played, but it appears that Miss Pignol was not in the room at the time designated. What is indisputable was that she possessed a locket or pin, with the portrait of the Kaiser's grandfather on one side and cornflowers on the other. In Miss Pignol's eyes it was a work of art and an object of sentiment, having been engraved by her father. And even after we entered the war she had affirmed, in the presence of another teacher, "I dare wear it."

Such was the chatter going on among the teachers of the Manual Training High School; just the conventional sort of gossiping and backbiting that in so many places is robbing the teaching profession of the dignity and humanity with which it was once clothed. When Miss Pignol returned to the school after a brief leave of absence in the middle of last March, the principal of the school felt called upon to hold an inquisition into her patriotism. Through this inquisition he ascertained that Miss Pignol refused to subscribe for war bonds; believed in a peace by conciliation; believed that our people did not want the war; that a referendum would show this; and that our government constitutes neither a democracy nor a true representative government. Let it be understood clearly: Miss Pignol was not charged with any acts exhibiting or implying these views. She was not charged with trying to propagate them. They were extracted from her through the principal's abuse of his official position. They were then embodied in a letter to the Associate Superintendent of Schools, Dr. John Tildsley, that same Dr. Tildsley of "implicit obedience to au-

thority" fame whose patriotism is as much purer than that of the United States government as the orthodoxy of any mean little divine is purer than that of the Founder of Christianity.

So Dr. Tildsley held an inquisition of his own. He found Miss Pignol sincere and straightforward, and counselled with her as to whether there was any way in which she could change her views so that she could continue in the school service. But Miss Pignol's views happened to be sincere, not to be changed at will like a garment. Accordingly Mr. Tildsley submitted formal charges to the Board of Education, (1) That Miss Pignol did not believe in the war; (2) That she was under the impression that it was not necessary for the United States to be engaged in the war; (3) That she would not do everything in her power to further the policies of the United States government in carrying on the war; (4) That she would not pledge her cooperation in every way in her power to the United States government in its measures for the prosecution of the present war against the German government.

Of these points the first two relate to matters of opinion. It was an indecent impertinence on the part of an official of a democracy to raise them at all. The last two look grave. But simmered down to the concrete fact at the bottom of them they amounted to only this: Miss Pignol would not buy Liberty bonds. She had seen an advertisement saying that one bond would buy 2007 bullets—that was in the time when our bond salesmen were experimenting in blood and thunder methods of propaganda—and that revolted her. She recognized her duty to urge her students to subscribe, employing the arguments furnished by the school and making any additional explanations necessary in their spirit, although feeling a little doubt as to her effectiveness in this work, as one to which she could not give herself wholeheartedly. She felt free to refuse to subscribe herself. If that was disloyalty, it may be observed, there was plenty of it not only in the schools but in every other profession or trade.

When it was decided to bring charges against Miss Pignol all there was against her was her refusal to buy bonds. Before her final trial she had subscribed for a Liberty bond. Because of the desire to retain her position? Her inquisitors insinuated this. But her own explanation is cogent. The Lichnowski revelations had placed Germany in a new light; so also had the behavior of the Germans after Brest-Litovsk. Miss Pignol had become convinced that Germany had to be beaten, and was ready to back up the United States government to the extent of her ability. This was embarrassing for the inquisition. Should she be permitted to escape? It was necessary to dig deeper into

her private views. Assistant Corporation Counsel McIntyre was entrusted with this enterprise.

"Do you believe in it [the war] now?"

"Yes; I believe it is just. I do not like it, if you want me to say that."

"Now, Miss Pignol, are you willing to do everything that lies within your power to make the United States successful in this conflict with Germany?"

"I think, yes."

"Are you willing to do everything you possibly can do?"

"Yes, I certainly am willing to do everything I can possibly do."

"Would you urge the pupils in the school to prepare themselves to go into the battlefield later in life?"

"Yes, I think I would."

"And fight against Germany?"

"Yes, that is my duty; I have to do it."

"And crush Germany, if necessary?"

"Why should they crush Germany?"

"That is the point at which you stop? That is the crux of this case, is it not?"

"I shall do my duty to the full. I shall do everything that I can possibly do, even if I should suffer very much for it. I do not know why you insist on making me say we should crush Germany."

"Because we are at war with Germany."

To Mr. McIntyre, Corporation Counsel, and to the committee of the Board of Education, it did not matter that the crushing of Germany was no part of the official American war aims. It did not matter that no democracy worthy of the name insists that all persons within its jurisdiction must make articles of personal faith out of official aims of any kind. While in Germany Miss Pignol had got into trouble because she had expressed contempt for the position of an officer who had declared that he never permitted himself to entertain views opposed to those of the Kaiser. Here were those petty American officials driving her out of a profession in which she had served faithfully because she allowed herself to entertain views opposed to their own.

But should not there be a distinction after all, between the liberties of a citizen in a democracy and those of a public official or employee? The citizen's opinions are free. His acts are subject to the law. Has the school teacher the same right to his own opinion? Or should he be subjected to inquisitorial proceedings and dismissed if the opinions he is honest enough to avow differ from those of his official superiors?

That depends on what we wish to make out of our schools. The Roman aristocrat turned his sons over to slaves for formal instruction in mathematics

or rhetoric or dancing. The sense of caste prevented the aristocratic youths from being infected with the mean and abject spirit of their servile masters. We American democrats have no caste device to keep our children from being influenced by the spirit that governs our schools. If we make that spirit one of intolerance and delation and servility we have not the slightest reason for expecting that our children will issue from the schools free and honest and self-respecting citizens. The Tildsleys and their kind may be willing to see our schools turn out a servile population. Are the plain democrats of the state of New York ready for the status of servility, for teacher and pupil alike? For it is impossible that the one should be free while the other is a slave. That is what turns on the Pignol case, which is soon to be re-heard by the higher educational authorities of the state, and to put the quality of their educational statecraft to the test.

ALVIN JOHNSON.

An Acquaintance

HE is a modern Jew of the United States of America, belonging evidently to a distinct group that others are able to differentiate and to which they can give a name. But in the forty or so years of his life he has, with but indifferent success, been able to determine for himself just what a Jew is and why he happens to be one. And he finds himself not unique, but one of a growing number. He knows that he is not a race, because Fishberg and the modern ethnologists have told him so. They have told him that he need no longer believe that he is an anachronistic Semite persisting as an odd survival in an Aryan civilization. He knows that he is not a religious entity, because he is philosophically and spiritually in the same attitude of mind as are many disfranchised Christians, who are assured that for them at least a compromise between the old ritualism and the modern thinking is not a conservation of spiritual energy. He is not a nationalist, being rather intensely and idealistically an American. He has no special pride of ancestry, such democratic assumptions always appearing a bit amusing to him, in whatsoever guise. Nor does he recognize in his own family life and personal relations nor in those of the group immediately about him unique benefits that differentiate them from the—perhaps—more loosely constructed Gentile nexus.

He has been accused of being an anti-Semite. He is not an anti-Semite, except in the sense that he dislikes bad manners, and that he refuses to be smothered in a certain "Jewishness" such as overwhelms one with too exclusive association within

the group. But he doesn't want to be associated too exclusively with any group. For a student and epicure of life, he says, it deadens the perceptions. And he is not more of anti-Semite than are most of the Jews he knows, who also dislike bad manners. (He has confessed to me that some of the most peevishly anti-Semite remarks he has heard have been from the lips of the Jews, who—and rightly enough too—would "knock the block off" anyone outside the group for saying exactly the same thing that they are uttering.)

He likes to be free to move about in the world. He dislikes being hampered by Jewishness in the same sense that he would dislike being hampered by poverty, or by being a woman, or by other evitable or inevitable restrictions, such as Fortune might impose. He knows that although, as an individual, he may not be brilliantly acceptable, he is as much worth-while—in many instances he modestly acknowledges that he is even more so!—as many of the men of his university and his profession who have made clubs that have been barred to him, and social associations that have rendered life more colorful and various. For as a non-Jew he might, with a certain freedom, associate with both Jew and Gentile; as a Jew who intends to remain a Jew he must move about cautiously in an alien world, walking the tight-rope of the conventions, with upon one shoulder pride and upon the other humor—not the easy carriage of a man at home in life, which is almost the sine qua non of a rational social intercourse.

His problem isn't at all a problem of tragedy. It is a problem of a sophisticated satirical comedy, a species of comedy perhaps not comprehensible to the average mind of America. If he were suffering for a "cause" they could understand him. If he were suffering for a cause he could perhaps understand himself and reconcile himself with himself. But he is suffering for something that to him has lost meaning. He is suffering from pin-pricks. Perhaps that is his tragedy.

He wishes to heaven it were possible for him to ally himself with the ardent young group of modern Jews who are finding in a re-creation of religious zeal a justification for their being. Temperamentally he would be happy to be swept by this wave of fervor. It would dignify and ennoble for him a position that sometimes verges on the grotesque. He has tried, but he can't. Such spiritual forces as he possesses must be poured into something more forward-reaching. He cannot now, as a being of this twentieth century, find his meaning of life in a separatist group and a separatist tendency. And he can't, try as he may, *feel* himself different. It is often with a real start that there is borne in upon him the fact of division. Indeed,