

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

[The New Republic welcomes communications from its readers in regard to subjects of current interest, and especially concerning articles which have appeared in its columns. Those of 300 words or less are necessarily more available for publication than longer letters.]

Virginia's Action on Slavery

SIR: In the New Republic for May 10th I observe a letter signed Fanny M. Burke, headed The South Did Protest Against Slavery, in which occurs the statement "The gradual Emancipation measure of the Virginia State Legislature of 1830 failed by one vote."

It is curious how the delusion with regard to the action of Virginia on slavery still persists. In spite of the testimony of Miss Burke's great-uncle, there is absolutely no documentary evidence that any emancipation measure in the nineteenth century ever came anywhere near enactment in Virginia. On the contrary, an examination of the Journals of the two Houses from 1829 to 1833, and of the Virginia State Constitutional Convention of 1829 to 1830, reveal the following indubitable facts:

(1) In the Constitutional Convention there was no proposition looking for emancipation. On a question whether the low-land slave-holding counties should continue to have a larger proportional representation in the legislature than the mountain counties, the slave-holders were successful, by the casting vote of the presiding officer.

(2) In the legislature of 1830-1831, a bill was introduced for the more rigorous restriction of free Negroes, and was voted down, 58 to 59, but subsequently passed.

(3) In the next session there was a debate on the evils of slavery, but a proposition for a referendum on the question whether there ought to be an emancipation act was defeated by a vote of 58 to 73.

That was the nearest Virginia ever came to emancipation. Nor was there between 1830 and 1860 in any slave-holding state any successful effort even to ameliorate the harsh conditions of slavery.

The abolition societies which flourished from about 1800 to about 1830 did include Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina; but that movement was practically dead before the Garrisonian abolition began. The protests against slavery in Virginia were partly based on philanthropy, and partly upon the rivalry between the sea-board and mountain counties, in which latter there were few slaves.

ALBERT BUSHNELL HART.

Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Lady Astor's Efficiency

SIR: I read with some interest Mr. Robert Littell's article on Lady Astor in your issue of May 3rd.

May I say that I do not think he has entirely gauged the reason of Lady Astor's popularity in this country? It is quite true that when she speaks Lady Astor has the knack of delighting and fascinating her audience; it is true that she invariably stands for the things she believes right; it is true also that she is patently sincere; but I do not think that her popularity is due in the main to any of these three things. Democracy breeds many effective speakers; most human beings do on the whole tend to stand for what they believe right and even patent sincerity is not a very infrequent virtue. The reason of Lady Astor's solid and increasing popularity in this country is quite another one; it is simply that she has shown during the few years of her parliamentary career that she is a person who gets things done. We find that when Lady Astor takes up any reform that reform has a way of taking a step forward.

I will give two instances out of many. There is a group of people who for many long and weary years have worked for an improvement in the laws relating to the protection of children; for a bill entitled The Criminal Law Amendment bill. They could never succeed in getting it passed into law. This year, at last, they have received a government promise to deal with the matter. Many factors no doubt have contributed to this satisfactory state of affairs, but there is little doubt in the minds of most of the people concerned that if Lady Astor had not been in Parliament that promise would not have been conceded.

Again, it is rumored in the press that the drink trade intend to spend £10,000 in Plymouth to try and defeat Lady Astor at the next general election. Whether this rumor be true or not I cannot say: the fact that it exists is testimony to the public belief in the measure of her effectiveness as a temperance reformer.

We in Britain come of a practical and a suspicious race. We are "slower to bless than to ban" and we prefer deeds to words. It is because of Lady Astor's efficiency rather than because of her charm that she stands high in our favor today.

RHONDDA.

London.

Phenomenal Hares

SIR: In your issue of March 1st you warn us of the danger to scientific freedom in the sphere of "biology and geology." I do not think most of your readers know—I am not sure that you know yourself—how much truth there is in the words "and geology."

So far as I know, the Sunday School Times is the chief organ of those who maintain that the Bible is absolutely free from errors of any sort whatever except those introduced by copyists and translators since it was written; and it is journalistic headquarters for the movement to exclude from institutions of learning any teaching inconsistent with this doctrine. From time to time it announces what it regards as encouraging beginnings of success in this movement.

Not only does the Sunday School Times deem the doctrine of evolution to be contrary to the truths for which it stands, but it perceives the close relation of the biological doctrine of evolution to the accepted outline of geology; and accordingly it campaigns, or at the very least it encourages its contributors to campaign, against the current teaching regarding the probable age of the earth, the processes by which the rocks have been built up, and the order of sequence in which different forms of life have appeared on earth. Whenever it can find professors of geology who will teach its preferred ideas on these points, it will certainly use its influence to get trustees to demand the appointment of such professors.

Publicity ought to be given to the fact that the Sunday School Times has hitherto refused to offer any specific discussion of the truth of Deuteronomy 14.7, "the hare and the coney, because they chew the cud." This text appears to have been inserted in the Bible by Divine Providence for the express purpose of making it impossible to hold that the Bible is literally free from error. For most of the indisputably false statements in the Bible admit of being explained away, plausibly or unplausibly, by the assumption that the original text has been wrongly copied, mistranslated, or misunderstood. Nobody can start any scandal, for instance, over the assertion of the original Hebrew that Saul was a year old when he became king (head and shoulders taller than the rest of the people), reigned two years until his death, and died leaving a grandson five years old. But Deuteronomy 14.7 is exempt from all such evasions. Nobody can devise any theory that it is wrongly copied or misunderstood. It is beyond dispute that the original author of that text shared the error of the poet Cowper in believing that the hare actually does chew

the cud, and made the same error regarding the beast called "coney" in the English Bible.

It would be a public service if all those who revere the authority of the Sunday School Times (and they are many) could have their attention called to the fact that that paper dares not take up the question of the truth of Deuteronomy 14:7.

STEVEN J. BYINGTON.

Ballard Vale, Massachusetts.

The Church and Social Service

SIR: The New Republic has occasionally an editorial on some phase of church activity which indicates what seems to many of its readers a captious spirit towards the churches. An illustration of this appeared in your issue of March 29th with reference to a communication from the Massachusetts Federation of Churches to Senator Lodge.

I presume that the communication to the Senator from the Federation was occasioned by requests for cooperation from various societies. The Federal Council and state and local federations of churches are constantly appealed to in behalf of legislation, important and unimportant; and any particular letter to a representative in Congress may or may not represent a major interest of the Federation. It is apparent from the letter that federations should be careful about lending their influence to proposed legislation.

The further comment of the editorial seems to indicate lack of information about what the churches are actually doing in the social movement. For example, reference is made to the Russian famine, as if the churches were not deeply involved in relief. As a matter of fact, the Federal Council is one of the constituent groups in the Hoover organization and has at present two commissioners on the way to Russia. It has raised also independently a large sum of money, and the Massachusetts Federation is cooperating in what is being done. Individual denominations are giving directly through missionary societies and by popular subscription. The Massachusetts Federation is active in industrial questions. About a year ago last December the New Republic published its industrial platform. It has also been doing valuable work in the community relations of the churches of Massachusetts, especially in rural fields, in addition to the routine duties. The Federal Council and the National Catholic Welfare Council are acting jointly on the crisis in the coal industry, as they acted earlier in the investigation of the Denver street car strike. One could fill an issue of the New Republic with illustrations.

I hope the church will never object to fair criticism, and I know that it offers plenty of opportunities; but may one urge sympathetic as against captious criticism, and that the New Republic from time to time shall call attention to the encouraging program of social education and social action which the churches are developing. Under social education I refer to the new curriculum of the Sunday school and the correlated educational production by the Research Department of the Commission on the Church and Social Service, in which several denominations and the two Christian Associations are cooperating.

WORTH M. TIPPY, Executive Secretary,
Commission on the Church and Social Service.
New York City.

Golden Rule Nash

SIR: I was much interested in Elizabeth Ragan's article on Golden Rule Nash, for I heard him speak at the Reverend Percy Grant's church a few weeks ago and I was by no means impressed with his sincerity. He is an expert orator, and an excellent raconteur, but to me his sentiments did not ring true. In the middle of his impassioned declaration of love and sympathy for the downtrodden working man, a quiet, thoughtful looking woman, a stranger to me, leaned over and whispered that it was rumored he paid the lowest wages in Cincinnati, but it had not needed that to arouse my scepticism. The most revelatory basis for judgment he gave me himself. He was telling of a meeting of his Board of Directors which he had called for the

purpose of telling them that the profits were still too high and that they must divide them again with their workers.

"They all voted to do it," said he, "there was a Jew among them, and he voted to, too, and I tell you when a Jew votes to give away any profits—well," the rest was lost in a shrug and laughter.

Instantly he was revealed to me in his true colors as fanatic as Ford. I could not possibly continue to respect him, for here he was pretending to live Jesus Christ, to follow his precepts more closely, more truly than almost anyone else, yet showing a contempt for the very people from whom Christ sprang, moreover, how could the Golden Rule possibly be his guide if he could indulge in cheap jibes at the expense of his fellow-men, even such as had intimate business relations with him? Was it possible he could fool himself with the idea that at that moment he was following the rule to do unto others only that which he would like done unto him?

No, that little speech offset all the rest of his two hour oration. He may preach the Golden Rule from city to city, from coast to coast, as a clever advertising dodge, but his spirit is surely not attuned to its spirit. Deep down, I am convinced that the only Golden Rule that moves him is the rule of obtaining all the gold he can!

ANNIE NATHAN MEYER.

The Burdens of the Armies of Occupation

SIR: Concerning the payment of debts, whether between peoples, or between individuals, there should be no discussion. However heavy the burden, neither a nation nor an individual can afford not to pay. And this is just as true of England, and France, and Italy, as it is of Germany and Russia. A future based upon any other principle rests upon sand.

So much for general principle.

In the concrete application to Germany another principle may be applied—a creditor nation should not add cruel usury to its bond.

Whether the support of an army of occupation amounts to cruel usury depends.

It seems to be the policy of France to maintain an army in excess of its needs for domestic policing—and it is my personal view that this policy has not the least taint of imperialistic designs.

But—in order to allocate any part of this burden to the conquered nation it should be entirely clear that save for the enforcement of payment of the war debt a corresponding number of troops would not be maintained—that the military burden would be by so much lighter.

It seems to me the question of the hour is, whether the normal military establishments of the creditor nations are adequate to enforce, if need be, compliance with the Treaty agreement. If so the burden of troops of occupation should be lifted from the shoulders of Germany. The right of occupation might well be retained—and if France should elect to quarter a section of her normal army upon German soil until the mortgage is lifted I can see no good objection. Certainly Germany is not in a position to protest.

The time seems to have arrived when the conquerors should not continue a single ounce of unnecessary burden upon the conquered.

JAMES H. HAMILTON.
Paris.

Books Free for Prisoners

SIR: Will you please publish this note to the effect that any prisoner, political or non-political, who makes the request, may obtain any of the books published by The Critic and Guide Company, absolutely free of charge?

The only solace left to prisoners is reading, and we wish to do a little something to lighten the misery of those of society's victims who have been unfortunate enough to be thrown behind prison bars.

WILLIAM J. ROBINSON, M.D.
12 Mount Morris Park West,
New York City.

The Crow's Nest

WHEN my father was in his thirties he decided to take up riding horseback. He joined a little riding club, which provided stabling and other conveniences; and after practising in there in the tanbark ring, he rode out in the Park.

The Park itself is only a tan-bark ring on a larger scale, nothing wild or adventurous; but it suited my father. He detests wildness—he's wild enough himself without any help from the landscape: he prefers things like landscapes and households to be orderly, and suitably arranged for his use. From this time on, he was as critical of the Park as he was of his home. He felt personally affronted for instance when papers were left lying about.

His first horse was a powerful bay by the name of Rob Roy. This horse didn't like my father, and my father had still less affection for him. But this was supposed to be of no importance—it was not even considered. Father bought him because he was spirited and sound, and well able to stand work; handsome too. He paid three hundred dollars for him, and expected him to do what he was told.

Rob Roy never looked upon the transaction in this way, however. He had an intense single-track nature; he was always thinking of his own point of view. Even if he *had* liked my father, this would have made trouble.

One typical scene between them, for example, occurred near the Park entrance. It was a warm autumn morning. Rob Roy and my father had trotted out of the club and into the Park, each thoroughly healthy and strong, and each intent on his thoughts. They made a fine sight as they went up the bridle path. All their plans coincided. But then a difference between them arose. My father wished to keep on. Rob Roy didn't. I don't know why Rob Roy wanted to stop; perhaps he didn't like the way Father rode him. Anyhow he began to make trouble. My father gave him a cut with his whip. Rob Roy whirled around. My father reined him up sharply and struck him again. Rob Roy reared.

As they fought, my father in his anger kept hitting Rob Roy; and Rob Roy in turn pawed the ground, and stamped on it, and tore it all up. They both perspired so freely that between them they must have lost gallons, and they both blindly stuck to their respective plans and would not give in.

But Rob Roy had the whole day before him, and my father did not—he had to get through his ride sometime and go to his office. He therefore decided that Rob Roy was crazy, and they returned to the club. Rob Roy was led off to his stall and rubbed down by a groom, and my father went to the dressing-room for members and was rubbed dry by Jim, the attendant.

Jim was a friendly old soul. "Have a nice ride, Mr. Day?" he would ask.

"Nice hell," my father would answer, and take his cane and go out.

These fierce morning combats gave our family a feeling of awe. We had never dreamed that anyone, man or beast, would attempt to resist Father's will. This rashness of Rob Roy's was like Satan's rebelling against God—it had a dark splendor about it, but to a believer like me it was full of horror.

In that fight between Satan and God, we are told that God won. There is a good deal of evidence around to the contrary, to a free-thinking mind, but nevertheless most

of us accept the official announcement. In the long war between my father and Rob Roy, we always assumed Father won, but there too I now see that Rob Roy may have looked at it differently. For the way that my father won the war was by deciding to sell him.

To us boys this seemed like a banishment. It made Rob Roy an outcast. Perhaps it only meant to him meeting a rider less uncongenial; but to us it seemed like obliterating him from the world, in the prime of his life. For years afterward he was spoken of as a strange being, a queer, insane creature, who had unaccountably and vainly attempted to disobey Father.

Rob Roy was a thorough-bred. His successor, Confucius, was more middle-class. Rob Roy was an adventurer. Confucius was a philosopher. Philosophers are as great-hearted as adventurers, but for the most part more docile. Confucius trotted wherever my father said, in any direction. He never once reared, never stamped on the ground, never snorted. There were sometimes little differences of opinion between him and my father, because Confucius got tired sooner than Father did, and wanted to stop. But he never made a direct issue of it, never fought for his rights; he tried to get them by passive resistance, rather, or by mild forms of sabotage. For instance, my father would set out with the plan in his mind of having a glorious gallop, up hill and down dale. Well, Confucius, who had to do the galloping, would keep it up for awhile—would keep it up far longer in fact than he had ever intended; for he found that a whip kept landing on his flank whenever he started to slacken. But, as he lost heart in the expedition, he also lost spring; and finally he would thump along so heavily that my father let up.

In general however the two got along very well. My father became enthusiastic about the pleasure of riding. Being a hearty, expansive man, he talked of this often, at home. He talked of it so much, in fact, that my mother began to feel he was selfish, in that he was keeping a pleasure for himself which should be shared with his family. If riding around the Park was so exhilarating, she said we all ought to do it.

My father said he wished that we could, but there was only one horse.

This silenced the family for awhile; but soon my mother spoke up: she didn't see why the rest of us couldn't ride the horse when Father was through.

The unreasonableness and impracticability of this idea made my father quite hot. It showed how little my mother knew about anything, especially horses, he said. He explained that Confucius was inclined to be sluggish already, and that he wouldn't be fresh enough for a man to ride if he did extra work.

My mother said firmly, then Father should get some more horses.

This took him very much aback. He always meant to do the right thing by us; and he began to fear that now his own goodness of heart was going to get him in trouble. His feeling was that when he innocently had gone in for riding, himself, he had never contemplated having to spend enough to mount the whole family. He said that if he had foreseen that we all would be wanting to ride through the Park, just because he, a hard-working man, got a little relief in that way, he would have gone without the relief, dammit. He would now. He'd sell out.

Of course he had no intention of doing this. Instead he bought one more horse. But what happened to that horse and the rest of us is a separate chapter.

CLARENCE DAY, JR.