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THE CITY

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ITS FUTURE

by Eliel Saarinen

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The Phoenix Nest

THE agenda this week seems multifold, I hardly know where to begin! John G. Moore of Hollywood, California, says he is trying to get together a talk on the World's Most Overrated Classic—a subject that might really start something! "Even if read, and acted upon as if they were 'truth,'" he says, "certain classics that promulgate erroneous ideas, false behavior, outworn patterns of 'heroism' and 'chivalry' that fitted other ages than our age (supposing our age is one of sanity—*What makes you think so?—Ed.*) do not, I think, make for decent humans." Think it over, my gentle ones!

Charles Henri Ford tells me that his magazine *View: The modern magazine of the arts* has been denied a Second Class Mailing Permit. He says he is not willing to accept the Postmaster's decision on this, as the complete integrity of his magazine's aims is attested by the fact that artists, art museums, university and college libraries, writers, and art collectors form the great bulk of its audience. I myself have seen it on sale at Brentano's, and I never dreamed that it could be unacceptable to the Post Office. I see that Rosamund Frost, Managing Editor of *Art News*, and Henry McBride, art critic of the *New York Sun*, are of the same opinion. *View* says it is determined to insist on its democratic right to a public hearing where it can defend itself openly and call in competent judges.

David F. Swenson of Minneapolis tells me that in a little volume published in 1852, and entitled "Rose of Sharon or Gems of Religious Verse," the following lines are included, which were found in Lord Byron's Bible, and rightly or wrongly attributed to him:

Within this awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries.
O, happiest they of human race,
To whom our God has given grace
To hear, to read, to fear, to pray,
To lift the latch, and force the way;
But better had they ne'er been born
Who read to doubt or read to scorn.

George Seldes of Grist Mill Road, Norwalk, has found a literary curiosity in *The London Tribune*. The writer, on looking into Lempriere's "Classical Dictionary," the "Who's Who" of the ancients, which he had procured for sixpence, was enthralled by a biography of Laïs, the famous courtesan, daughter of the mistress of Alcibiades. The priceless passage runs as follows:

Demosthenes visited Corinth for the sake of Laïs, but informed by the courtesan that admittance to her bed was to be bought at the

enormous sum of about £200 English money, the orator departed, and observed that he would not buy repentance at so dear a price.

Howard R. Marraro, Assistant Professor of Italian at Columbia, last week in the Sunday *Herald-Tribune* submitted Longfellow's "Monte Cassino (Terra Di Lavoro)" as of especial interest to us today. "In the Spring of 1868, during his second and last visit to Italy, Longfellow spent a night with the Benedictines at Monte Cassino." The two verses of the poem that I like best are:

And there, uplifted, like a passing
cloud
That pauses on a mountain summit
high,
Monte Cassino's convent rears its
proud
And venerable walls against the
sky.

The day was dying, and with feeble
hands
Caressed the mountain tops; the
vales between
Darkened; the river in the meadow-
lands
Sheathed itself like a sword, and
was not seen.

War has never been crueller than
in imposing the necessity upon the
Allies of the destruction of this place
of peace. Longfellow ends his poem,
as it would seem, almost prophet-
ically:

The conflict of the Present and the
Past,
The ideal and the actual in our
life,
As on a field of battle held me fast,
Where this world and the next
world were at strife.

For, as the valley from its sleep
awoke,
I saw the iron horses of the steam
Toss to the morning air their plumes
of smoke,
And woke, as one awaketh from a
dream.

"Malachi Whittlestock," of this city, says that a certain ancient manuscript may throw light on the Churchill-Stalin-Roosevelt discussions. It turns out to be the famous jingle, included in a collection of Mother Goose which I myself edited, called "There Were Three Jovial Huntsmen." You will recall that they hunted all day, leaving many things behind, and could not agree upon what they found. But, I believe the Churchill-Stalin-Roosevelt discussions to have been a great deal more fruitful than that!

William P. Boatwright of Danville, Virginia, writes:

Referring to Professor James's query in *SRL*, your column, February 19, as to Mark Twain's joshing the "Young Ladies" commence-

ment essays, his Chapter XXI in "Tom Sawyer" seems to fit the description exactly. This was at the High School commencement in Hannibal, but he may have used in substance in the book a newspaper skit he had written long before about the Young Ladies (with accent on "Young Ladies," of course,) Seminary at Benicia, California. I guess so, anyway.

I wonder if you know a remarkable organization known as G.O.F.P.O.P., or the Guild of Former Pipe Organ Pumpers. Having just received a communication from the Offices of Chet Shafer, Grand Diapason, Three Rivers, Michigan, I find the following information concerning International Headquarters, Loft No. 1, upon the envelope of his letter. It reads: "Located in the old G.A.R. & W.R.C. Hall . . . one flight up over the Wittenberg Boys' Newsstand and Free Reading Room . . . which is in where Old George Avery used to have his Hay, Feed, Grain, Bean Pods and Middlins Store, and just kitt'rin across the street from where Old Eli Knauss had a pink-nostriled, dapple-gray wooden geldin' out in front of his Harness, Carriage and Bicycle Repository." The motto of the organization is "Pump, for the Wind is Fleeting." We are also informed, on the letter paper, that affiliated industries are, "Imperial Wild Cast-Iron Animal Life Impounding Preserve, Goldfish Proving Grounds, Team Track and Sacred Segar Store Indian Sanctuary." The Loading Docks were discontinued in 1933 and the Continental Headquarters in Paris, France, evacuated in 1940!

Joseph Joel Keith of Los Angeles, California, contributes the following:

THE PEOPLE, YES SIR!

Commander Vanderbilt was the Governor of Rhode Island and made an excellent reputation for himself because of the democracy displayed

by him, his lovely wife and even the twins. It's said they spent a great deal of Daddy's campaign days leaning out of the limousine waving to passers-by and endearing themselves to the Rhode Island populace." *The New Republic* quoting from society section of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

See
a true nobility,
high as a steeple:
man who loves man much
and need not touch
the people!

Years ago, in an old number of the *Yale Literary Magazine*, No. 724, to be exact, there appeared a sonnet entitled "1814: After La Rothiere." It was written by a great admirer of Napoleon. Its final rhyme was a trifle difficult. It may interest readers to know that it was signed "S. V. Benét." It is not, I think, such a bad sonnet for an undergraduate, whose life was to make a definite impress upon American letters. Here it is:

Thick smoke clouds rise into the sullen sky
From where a village smolders. Cattle low
Loudly and long, as Cossacks drive them slow
Along the muddy roads. From nearer by
A woman wails an unavailing cry
To God, and on the dirty, trampled snow
Black forms lie stiffening, while to and fro
The vultures wheel, a ghastly company.
Yea, France, the end is near, the Allies crowd
Around thee, jackals eager for the kill!
Yet thou shalt rise once more, once more recall
Thine ancient glories when triumphant, proud,
Napoleon strikes their ranks, the eagle still,
And Blücher reels back from Montmirail!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
MOST SECRET MOST IMMEDIATE <i>Howard Swiggett</i> (Houghton Mifflin: \$2.)	Adventure packed yarn of pre-Pearl Harbor military intelligence man's exploits in conquered France and other perilous places.	Good spy stuff, especially in latter half. Romantic touches slightly retard action but they're reasonably infrequent.	Good
THE SAINT ON GUARD <i>Leslie Charteris</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Now working for Washington, Simon Templar solves two violence-packed yarns of sabotage and black-marketing.	Both "novellas" are in customary swift Saint style with hairbreadth 'scapes, beautiful gals, antagonistic cops, etc.	Standard brand
WINDS OF EVIL <i>Arthur W. Upfield</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Two old murders and a fresh attempt engage attention of Insp. Napoleon Bonaparte, Australian sleuth extraordinary.	Background exceptionally interesting, and "Bony" is as clever as ever—altho' finish is slightly outside mystery canon.	Agreeable

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a special and intelligent clientele; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purpose and character of *The Saturday Review*. Ads of a strictly personal nature are limited to an exchange of correspondence, thus also enabling an exchange of reference. Rates: 10 cents per word including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received eight days in advance of publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers. Address Personal Dept., *Saturday Review*, 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

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YOUNG MAN desires work as book reviewer with magazine, newspaper, etc. Box 204-J.

I'M A YOUNG LADY, Norwegian-American, of kindly nature, and would enjoy corresponding with refined bachelor under 45. I like to write, sing, paint, travel, dance, cook, bake apple pies, ski, hike, etc., but unfortunately I neither smoke nor drink. Box 205-J.

GENTLEMAN planning Mexican sojourn. desires male companionship. References exchanged. Box 214-J.

(Continued on page 30)