

The Phoenix Nest

WHAT LIBERAL FRONT?

INOTE as dangerous a certain type of name-calling recently indulged in by George Creel in a "fighting" article defending Secretary Hull from attacks by his critics. The article appeared in *Collier's*, a national magazine with a large circulation. Mr. Creel bunched the Secretary's critics all together as "the self-styled Liberal Front." To my mind a genuinely bad thing was Mr. Creel's branding of

the ideologists, emotionalists and fellow travelers who make up the self-styled Liberal Front. They want him [Hull] to import his policies from abroad, putting the interests of other countries above America's, while he insists on *home* products, holding to the old-fashioned theory that the welfare of the United States comes first.

Therefore, presumably, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Walter Lippmann, Bruce Bliven, Freda Kirchwey, Dorothy Thompson, the *New York Post*, *PM*, Samuel Grafton, Drew Pearson, and many others who have criticized Secretary Hull or certain of his policies, all want that, and are all of that ilk. In the summation to his article Mr. Creel lets fly again:

Not that it matters to the muddled emotionalists, parlor pinks, fellow travelers and avowed Communists who form the self-styled Liberal Front,

They are indeed, terrible people; but are they all of them all of those things? Or what is Mr. Creel's "Liberal Front"? Does it reduce itself

to Earl Browder? But I understand that Mr. Browder has now written to *Collier's* that he deeply respects Mr. Hull! And the Communists have had their hands full, since Mr. Creel wrote his article, explaining Stalin's recognition of Badoglio—even as Secretary Hull is now asking him to explain it! No; Mr. Creel says at one point, "reputable men and women, even reputable newspapers, joined in the hysterical hue and cry."

But surely it is ill-advised in the extreme, and by no means serving the Secretary's cause, to lump all his critics together as something to sneer at—"The Liberal Fronters ought to be a pushover," and then call them all sorts of names. Were Mr. Creel's argument for the Secretary's policies absolutely irrefutable and correct in every particular, it would still be a bad thing to make a mock of the word Liberal. Besides, it reduces itself to nonsense! Just the other night I heard Joseph C. Hartsch in "The Meaning of the News," over WABC, remark that, "Our cautious diplomatic policy has proceeded side by side with a tarnishing of the Moscow declarations." Can it be—O horror!—that Hartsch is a "fellow traveller"!

Mr. Creel puts the blame for many of our policies squarely on Congress. Another outspoken epithet-slinger, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, wouldn't

like that! In the same week that I read Mr. Creel's article, I read of Captain Rickenbacker, at a public function, branding all critics of Congress as "termites."

These signs and omens do not augur well for free speech or reasonable argument. The times are full of public issues that demand a thorough airing. When it has been a question of criticism of the Administration (meaning one essentially gallant man in office) many high-sounding things have been said about free speech and the necessity for open and unhampered comment. But now, if you criticize him, Mr. Creel, well the pleasantest thing the Secretary of State'll call you will be a "muddled emotionalist."

In any event, as liberals, we can turn from such heated gentlemen and congratulate *The New York Times* upon the sanest and clearest statement of what is at issue in regard to the Soldier's Vote, and what makes practical good sense in the situation, in their editorial of March 9, called (with reference to Governor Dewey's proposal) "It Won't Work." In regard to the contention of the Departments of War and the Navy, *The Times* went on to say that "we fail to see any nonpartisan, nonpolitical reason for the furious opposition with which this proposal has been received in Congress and elsewhere." That will certainly make Captain Rickenbacker awfully mad!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 40

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. The solution to Crypt No. 40 will be found in the next issue.

WROW, WROW ZI, ZI; WROW,
WROW ZI SAW, ZI SAW; QTW
WROW, WROW ZI SAW, ZI
SAW WROW WROW ZI; SAC
ZI WROW, WROW ZI, WROW
WROW ZI SAW.

—OTWRAC TSDSAYS.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 39
IN EVEN A MEDIOCRE ARTIST
ONE SOMETIMES FIND A RE-
MARKABLE MAN.

—F. W. NIETZSCHE.
—BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE MISADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES <i>Ellery Queen, Editor</i> (Little, Brown: \$2.50)	Thirty-odd imitations, burlesques, etc., of the famous Sherlock with amiable notes by Mr. Queen.	Diverting mixture of talented and trivial material. "Must" for Sherlockians and pleasant pastime for all mystery fans.	<i>Pièce de résistance</i>
THE ROPE BEGAN TO HANG THE BUTCHER <i>C. W. Grafton</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Kentucky lawyer's first case quickly turns into double murder mystery. At price of smashed face he nabs killer.	Well-developed—although not entirely unguessable—plot; bevy of interesting characters—including the killer—and a likable and believable detective.	Very good
NO LITTLE ENEMY <i>Oliver Weld Bayer</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Famous cartoonist and merchant-marine hero head bond-selling tour that produces three murders. Cartoonist gets his man.	Suspenseful and timely tale with more to it than meets the eye. Characters ably done and pay-off, 'tho telegraphed, a thriller.	Good stuff
FIVE WILL FREEZE <i>Margaret Miller</i> (Random House: \$2.)	Driver of Canadian "sno-bus" vanishes and plunges passengers into maelstrom of murder and inexplicable happenings.	Bang-up thriller and excellent character study of group of conflicting personalities. Puzzle is rewarding, 'tho it tends to solve itself.	Worth-while

Miracles and a Dying Country

THE OUTNUMBERED. By Catherine Hutter. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1944. 356 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by EMILY SCHLOSSBERGER

IN this first novel Miss Hutter has assigned herself a very ambitious task: the story, fictionized, of a religious miracle, the stigmatization of Therese of Konnersreuth, woven into the pattern of Austria's last years. Though she does not seem to have attained fully what she set out to do, she has nevertheless come through with a thoroughly readable, absorbing, and in spots beautiful story.

The central figure of the novel is Feghe, a Jewish orphan girl who is taken into the house of rich Doctor Sappony, the owner of the fashionable tuberculosis sanitarium at Strubl, in the midst of the Vienna Woods. Therese, the over-devout Catholic wife of the Jewish doctor, and Andrea, his head nurse, a militant Protestant, battle for the soul of the child who, however, makes her own choice, when she turns to love and worship her God in the Catholic fold. Dennis Seymour, a young Englishman who is a patient at the sanitarium, befriends her and proves the greatest influence in the life of the simple, humble girl who, though a servant, stands above and apart from class and race distinctions. As Feghe grows to womanhood, her sweet humility and saintliness develop, until drama reaches a high point when the miracle saves her life and makes the village in which she lives a place of pilgrimage in the midst of political upheaval.

Though hers is a beautiful story of strong faith—sometimes tinted, it seems, with colors that reflect a master's portrait of Bernadette—Feghe herself does not come completely to life. Nor do the meekness and gentleness of the outnumbered people triumph over the brute force of darkness by their humility: for they are permitted to escape by purely accidental circumstances when the brown flood of Nazism sweeps the valley and engulfs Austria.

Around this central figure moves a host of secondary characters, and though one is always conscious that they are planted to convey an idea, to symbolize certain strata of society, or a party, they are all very real and pulsating with life. The coarse and backward peasantry of this particular "neck of the woods"; the progressive school teacher who lives and literally dies for her social democratic ideals; the dissatisfied, double-crossing country doctor; the multinational clientele of the sanitarium; the beautiful Vienna society ladies—they all together, their fates and characters—are deftly woven into the story of Austria from 1924 to 1938.

Like so many authors of novels laid in the Europe before World War II, Miss Hutter is not entirely free from evaluation of past events in the light of present, prophecy in retrospect, as it were. But since she is writing for entertainment and not a political or sociological study, she should not be taken to task for a certain bias, or for lack of a certain accuracy which a description of Austria's last years would demand. There was certainly no air of doom, or staleness, hanging over the lovely Austrian countryside as early as 1924. And only very few persons, certainly not the majority, were aware that the country, unhappily divided into many parts, was headed for its doom.

PERSONALS

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(Continued on page 26)



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