

EVERY OTHER WEEK or so, it seemed to me, I read about another launching of a liberty ship that had been named after a famous writer or publisher. By this time, I wagered to myself, there must be forty or fifty such vessels sailing the high seas. In a sudden burst of journalistic research, I asked for a complete list from Oscar Schisgall, of the Book and Magazine Bureau of the O.W.I. The obliging Mr. Schisgall dug up the necessary information, and seemed just as nonplussed as I was myself when the total was compiled. No fewer than 162 liberty ships completed to date bear the names of famous novelists, poets, and dramatists; 134 are named for publishers, editors, and newspapermen!

A careful check-up of both lists disclosed twenty-two duplications. Even so, that leaves a total of 274 ships in this category alone. Figure for yourself how many thousand liberty ships must have been launched in the past two years! . . .

JIMMY FIDLER is a Hollywood gossip-monger who achieved a certain national notoriety when he joined forces a few years ago with some of the most reactionary and bigoted senators in Congress to smear all of the people who were trying hardest to improve the standards of the motion-picture industry. The "exposé" was a gigantic fiasco, and Mr. Fidler vanished Westward, where, strange to say, some of the people he had attacked most viciously continued to feed him tid-bits for his radio roundup of cinematic trivia.

Mr. Fidler has just encountered a more spirited victim in the person of Margaret Mitchell, author of "Gone with the Wind." In his July 30 broadcast, the *Atlanta Journal* reports that he declared:

MGM officials received a surprise last week when a studio check, properly signed but otherwise blank, was returned by registered mail. Inquiry revealed that Louis B. Mayer, MGM head man, had sent the blank check to Margaret Mitchell, author of "Gone with the Wind." . . . Mayer had invited Miss Mitchell to fill in the amount—any amount she deemed fair—for movie rights to her new book, which is almost finished. . . . In returning the check, Miss Mitchell said she preferred to wait, and let her book sell on its own merits.

"Readers will remember," continues the *Journal*, "that Margaret Mitchell dreamed up the green-eyed, spunky Scarlett O'Hara, who met a renegade soldier on the stair at Tara, and shot

him where he stood. Now Miss Mitchell has taken off her own white gloves, and revealed some verbal brass knuckles for the edification of Mr. Fidler, to wit:

Your story is false in every detail. I have received no fantastic offer from MGM or anyone else. Naturally, I could not have returned a check which I never received. The message you credited me with sending along with the non-existent check is one I never heard of till you imagined it.

I have no new book almost finished. In fact, I have not even started a new book.

Since "Gone with the Wind" was published in 1936, I have not written a single line on a new book. My father, who died in June, was ill for several years. My duties to him and what little I could do in war activities have occupied all of my time. There has been no time for writing books. This you could easily have verified.

I don't suppose it matters to you that you caused me embarrassment and trouble. But you did, and, as a matter of simple decency, you should correct your false statements. I am calling on you to make a correction, in your next broadcast.

Last year you broadcast that I was having serious eye trouble and was under the care of a Chicago eye specialist. There wasn't a word of truth in it, as I was having no eye trouble and I have never been in Chicago in my whole life. . . . Please correct your new misstatements as speedily as you can.

Has Mr. Fidler ever confessed his error over the radio? And who *did* get the blank signed check from L. B. Mayer? For the answer to these world-shaking problems, try and find somebody who listens to the Fidler broadcasts. . . .

CAPTAIN JOSEPH FOX writes from the front that constant exposure to the famous English humorous weekly, *Punch*, is gradually educating American soldiers to a point where they are

beginning to appreciate and deeply relish its contents and point of view. He encloses an unsigned anecdote, clipped from the November 11, 1942, issue (where he is stationed, that is a comparatively fresh addition to the library) and says that his company rated it "four stars." The boys' tastes have changed since they left Wappinger's Falls behind them!

CHILDREN ALWAYS WIN

The child was put into the carriage by the guard at Paddington. The guard asked, "Anybody going to Hereford?" and the warm-hearted soldier said "Yes," and then smiled sheepishly, like a man who knows that he has made a mistake, and that the mistake is irretrievable.

Secure in the knowledge that she was getting out at Reading, the old lady smiled, as if she loved children. So did the old gentleman. He was getting out at Reading, too.

The child smiled back.

Everybody smiled.

The aunt who had come to see the child off did not bother to wait. She departed, smiling too.

The child said, "There's two engines on this train, one behind and one in front."

The old gentleman said, "The engine at the back isn't going with the train."

The child said, "I never said it was. It's an engine, though, isn't it? There's two engines on this train."

The train started.

The child looked out of the window and said, "3."

After which it said, "4, 5, 6" in rapid succession.

The old lady said, "He's counting engines."

The child got up to ten.

The old gentleman hoped the child could not count above ten.

The child said, "11."

When the child got to nineteen, the old lady, looking out of the window, said, "20."

The old gentleman said, "21."

The soldier spotted the twenty-second.

"23," from the old lady.

They were taking up so much of the window between them that the child hadn't a chance.

"24," from the old gentleman.

"That sort of engine doesn't count," the child said bravely.

"Of course it does," the old gentleman retorted with spirit.

"25," said the soldier.

"You can't look out that side," said the child.

"Why not, son?" the soldier wanted to know.

"Because you can't," the child said. "It's a rule."

"Absurd," the old gentleman said. "Perfectly ridiculous rule. Any engine counts as long as it is an engine. 26."

"27," the old lady and the child said together.

"I saw it first," said the child.

"You didn't," the old lady declared firmly.

"28," from the old gentleman.

The child said, "I call counting engines silly."

The old gentleman said, "Nonsense." Quickly he added, "29."



—“Stops,” Middlebury College Press.



"And after his kidney operation the doctor said he had a leaky heart, and his left lung is gone, and his liver. . . ."

The train ran into a cutting out of sight of other engines.

"78," said the child.

"You mustn't cheat," the old gentleman said sternly.

"I'm not cheating," said the child. "I saw the others just now, but I didn't say anything about them."

"No," said the old gentleman. "29 it is."

The child said, "I'm going to be sick."

Everyone stopped looking for engines. They stopped smiling too—all except the child, who started smiling again.

"39," it said. . . .

A HARCOURT, BRACE publicity note heralds Amram Scheinfeld's forthcoming "Women and Men" as "a complete picture, for the first time, of the fundamental differences between the sexes." Oh baby, wait until John Sumner gets hold of a copy! . . . The fastidious Ted Holliday hails Elizabeth Daly's "The Book of the Dead" and R. A. J. Walling's "The Corpse Without a Clue" as "the two best detective stories of the summer." "Either one of them," he adds, "would have redeemed a superlatively dull season for the addict." . . . Optimistic publishers who predicted an easing of the paper shortage in the fourth quarter are eating their words. In fact, another cut of five percent is a distinct possibility. Only the eminently fair and noteworthy contributions to this problem by Harry West and his staff for the W.P.B. and Mel Minton and his committee for the publishers have pre-

vented frayed tempers from bursting long ago. Today when a critic tells you a book isn't worth the paper it's printed on, he's not kidding. . . . G. B. Stern refers to the paper shortage in England in her new book, "Trumpet Voluntary." "Every letter you receive today," she writes, "gives you a pang of alarm before you recognize the writing. Every addressed envelope is now a palimpsest; you can distinguish, behind the economy label, the original name and address underneath, and perhaps even a third name and address scribbled underneath that. In one of those buried addresses you may be interested to recognize the writing of a mutual friend, and you speculate, before you open it, on why old So-and-So can possibly have been writing to old So-and-So. (And why to him and not to me?) That long legal-looking envelope, which used to announce a legacy in all the best old-fashioned fiction, now merely appears in your postbag because the sender had himself received a letter from a previous sender who had had a letter from his mother who had heard from a lawyer who had started out with an envelope of his own." . . .

THE LATEST shaggy dog story concerns a fly who was escorting her daughter across the head of a very bald man. "How quickly things change," she mused. "When I was your age, my dear, this was just a footpath."

BENNETT CERF.



This is Jessie Benton Fremont

one of the most
exciting women in
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the American dream.

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Education and Religion

The Making of a Rounded Individual

GEORGE N. SHUSTER

THE simplest definition of education is: an endeavor to impart to young people a mastery of these basic skills upon which intelligent action depends. And the easiest way to define religion is to say that it is the business of saving one's soul. No doubt the skills which concern education are reasoning, expressing oneself, reckoning, and conducting an experiment. Our schools have introduced a great many other skills, some of them needed because our society lacks an adequate apprentice system. You may also, if you like, insist that education is, in addition, adaptation to social living. Religion, on the other hand, strives to train young people in the quest for knowledge of God and in the arts of spiritually motivated service. It is true that a great many other matters are sometimes associated with religious education. Bulletins announce courses in the malignancy of alcohol; a rally to the war against internationalism; and training in the dogma that the OGPU isn't so bad, after all.

On the subject of concordance between the religious and the educational ideal, I assume that all the side-shows have been boarded up for the moment, and that we are seriously asking ourselves whether the individual who has been instructed in the functions of adult living—who can in a measure tell sense from nonsense, can speak his piece, is able to reckon with the mystery of numbers, and is in a position to judge the impact of natural science upon his life and thought—also has some legitimate concern with the healing of his own spirit.

One may reply by adducing a plain fact. If the human being is worth educating in the manner described, then there must be some value from which his value is deduced. That you consider it meritorious to train a boy or girl in the life-arts rather than in typewriting or hop-picking only is rooted in your conviction that the boy or girl is a person and therefore endowed with that strange quality we call "dignity." This dignity we are in the habit of associating with the "rights" of man; and we may, if we wish, be quite utilitarian about what we are doing and declare that without "dignity" and "rights" existence would not be worth while, or brutal, or totally lacking in humanistic sig-

nificance. I do not wish to repudiate what is helpful or valid in the utilitarian argument when I say that, if human life is only a biological phenomenon, the teleology latent in which is purely naturalistic, it remains the most difficult task in the world to persuade man that he has a dignity within nature which is yet not that of nature. If all of him springs from the same matrix as does the ape, why should his assumption of a greater meaningfulness than the ape's be, in the final analysis, anything more than a vain illusion? And the trouble certainly is that man is on one side so bestial that given a fighting chance to assume his bestiality he will unchain his libidos with a yell.

Sometimes a blood-curdling yell—the scream in the dark and the daylight which has now been heard from Kiev to Nanking. All the historians agree that until quite late in the nineteenth century the German people was an order-loving amalgam of poets and farmers, princelings and civil servants, policemen and cathedral canons, knowing not even the thrill of the zest in organized power to which we give the name of nationalism. That the discovery of this thrill alone has produced the events of the past twelve years—for that much time has passed since the rise of Hitler to power—is a convenient but immature assumption. Certainly "Mein Kampf" makes no such claim for nationalistic emotion. It presents a series of conclusions for the utilitarian argument in the spirit of one who knows that there exists a whole group of corrupted intellectuals forming the spearhead of a public, unfortunately grown large, that recognizes no inhibitions save the barriers which have been erected against conquest, against having, against the profitable enslavement of others.

NOW religion speaks not of the dignity but of the holiness of man. And by this it means not an assumption to which, perchance, the victim in a concentration camp might appeal against his tormentors, but a startling, inexorably costly discovery, implicit in the act of finding God. Job could complain to Jehovah because he was Jehovah's son—the sores in his flesh were those given by his Father's lash. Polycarp, braving the fire and the wild



—From "The New Order."
". . . there exists a group of corrupted intellectuals that recognizes no inhibitions . . ."

beasts of the Romans, was supremely confident that over him these things could not prevail ultimately because the holiness to which he aspired was everlasting. Perhaps it is in the cult of the saints that what is meant by the holiness of man finds its most effective symbolic expression. For reverence unto men in whom holiness is manifest is reverence paid to God from whom it came. You go upon your knees before a saint because in him the Divine substratum of human life is manifest. The prayer in the Catholic Mass that the petitioners may be "consorted with that Divinity which designed to become a sharer in our humanity" is a specially daring expression of what is meant.

Therewith the concept of the dignity of man is given a foundation. It matters not a whit whether throughout history individual professors of religion have drawn incorrect inferences from their belief. Nor does it matter greatly that the dualism between nature and the supernatural which the fact of holiness inevitably brings with it leads to constant tension and drama that is difficult, if not impossible, to resolve. The dichotomy between human life in its animal and its spiritual implications is rooted in the mystery of the world order for which the great religions can find only tentative explanations. But it is also rooted in the facts of life. It is analogous to the conflict into which the farmer enters by planting seed. On the one hand, he coöperates with the forces of nature, with sun and rain and breeze. And on the other hand the same forces, intensified into drought and storm, are there to undo the work of his hand. But this dualism is utterly unlike that which dogs the assumption that human life is purely