

Academy of Arts and Letters for good diction, and couldn't stand for dirty work at this, of all crossroads. For making the Mozartian trinity of "Figaro," "Don Giovanni," and the "Flute" a quartet Bing deserves the thanks of all music lovers.

Thanks are also in order to the oligarchy known as NBC for lavishing the time, care, money, and talent to bring into existence Gian-Carlo Menotti's "Amahl and the Night Visitors" for a Christmas Eve premiere on TV. In the forty minutes or so of "Amahl" Menotti has affirmed some things about his talent, demonstrated others for the first time. Musically it is his most accomplished score, in the sense that it makes few false moves, follows no blind alleys, shows an almost masterful concentration on essentials.

In his treatment of the Christ Child theme—Amahl is a crippled lad who encounters the Three Kings, offers them his only possession, a crutch, and is miraculously cured thereby—Menotti has challenged the memory of such illustrious workers in the Christmas spirit as Handel, Bach, Corelli, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Humperdinck. That he did not profane, but rather sanctified the memory is the surest index to his accomplishment.

The feat of casting which produced young Chet Allen as the perfect embodiment of Amahl was no sleight of hand, rather a product of painstaking elimination. An expressive face, a fluent soprano voice, and a fourteen-year-old conviction gave to his work an actuality no art could counterfeit. The professionals of the cast could hardly match this kind of total immersion, but Rosemary Kuhlmann was excellent (if a little strident) as the mother, Andrew McKinley, Leon Lishner, and David Aiken wholly Menottian as the kings. Thomas Schippers made one consistently aware of the values in the orchestral score as Kirk Browning did in his arrangement of the action for the cameras. What one could see of Eugene Berman's decor was wholly apropos, though color TV would doubtless have helped. That, too, will come one day to "Amahl," for Menotti has added something durable to the lore of Christmas, and NBC has been rewarded with no morning-glory but a perennial.

—IRVING KOLODIN.



THE PERILS OF CONFORMITY

(Continued from page 8)

Soviet Union. In a real sense it is taking place here at home, a wholly domestic contest. . . . We need an aware belief, a passionate faith in the professed principles we are so prone to abandon in practice.

Professor Carr makes race prejudice his chief theme; and his searching examination of the current situation is clinched by a quotation from Nehru, who complained in an address at Columbia University that the West has "too often despised the Asian and the African and still in many cases denies them not only equality of rights but even common humanity and kindness." We Caucasians are assuredly vulnerable as long as we retain our social superciliousness. The divergence between our cherished Constitution and our day-by-day conduct does not escape the critical notice of other peoples. Not all our lip service in favor of racial equality will counteract the unhappy impression made by photographs of riots in Detroit or Atlanta. We have already lost the battle of ideas if we do not practise what we so ardently preach.

When Professor Chafee speaks of "the mental pestilence of hatred and fear which is raging through the land," he is calling attention to a phenomenon which disturbs well-meaning citizens. We cannot make much headway in unifying the world while our neighbors know that within our borders white hates black, Christian hates Jew, and employee hates employer. We cannot convert others while we condone the defamation of character for political purposes. The persecution of courageous thinkers for nonconformity is not likely to make smaller nations feel safe under our widespread wing.

NEVERTHELESS the signs are not all ominous. The mere fact that a volume of this nature can be openly published and read is testimony that freedom has not altogether disappeared. The increasing irritation and boredom with Senator McCarthy and his smear gang prove that the American people will not forever endure being gulled and bullied. Our intellectual climate is still such that public opinion has a chance to form and be felt. After all, we do have elections at which voters may express their views and newspapers to which they may write. It must astonish natives of other countries to hear what is being said openly about our Government on the floor of the Congress by our own representa-

tives. Alan Barth has well said, "Nothing that the agents of Communism have done or can do in this country is so dangerous to the United States as what they have induced us to do to ourselves."

I agree fully with Professor Wilcox when he says in his introduction, "Our society is strong enough to withstand criticism." Our system of free enterprise, if allowed to function as its founders intended, need not resort to force for its defense. I believe, however, that we can convert others permanently only by precept and example, not by suppression—not even by military victory. One of our missions at the present crucial moment should be to show the world that our American social and political and economic order is more efficient than that of Communistic countries, that it leaves men and women happier, and offers them the maximum of hope and opportunity. There is no reason why we should not do this if we choose representatives who put country above party and think in terms of tolerance, not of hate. It is inconsistent to boast of our strength and then display our fear at the same time. Fortunately, leaders like those who have made this book are aware of the dangers and willing to speak out against them.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT No. 447

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 447 will be found in the next issue.

VUHLVXHNVCX VE HE

LCCB HE UHXK PCKHLGE—

HXB ACQ UOSA SAGHJGD.

— LGCDLG SODNVE.

• Answer to Crypt No. 446

A great city is that which has the greatest men and women.

—WALT WHITMAN.

LUCKY DIP

(Continued from page 19)

to Autumn" (which was written, I think, in the orchard softness of Hampshire). Even the flinty pebble-ridge seemed lukewarm for sitting. The busy German Ocean surf, usually as harsh as German verbs, seemed mild and almost apologetic, less Bismarck and more Heine. Tiny trawlers, trailing easy strands of smoke, lifted their bows on the herring run toward Yarmouth. We were too idle even to speir and stoop the usual search for carnelians and amber. It was not hard to imagine, beneath this gentle sea, the crumbled and barnacled churchscape of Saxon piety. How, in our brief time, to seize and winnow the grain of this heavenly day? We looked along the shore. For miles it was empty except for three or four girls paddling a few hundred yards away. Privacy was adequate. Already twice that sunburned month we had bathed in that supposed unfriendly ocean, at Yarmouth, and near Paston of the Letters.

We spaced ourselves discreetly. The older lady, who thought it felt breezy, sat on the folder of American Express cheques. If these were swallowed up like Dunwich we would be as hard put to it as any monks of St. Edmund. The others, in the napery of their small clothes, plunged gaily into the water.

I SWAM out some way. There seemed no undertow; perhaps the foundered walls and chapels made a submarine breakwater? I listened, submerged, for the toll of bronze; groped on the bottom for pyxes or ancient collection-boxes. Wallowing and sounding beyond my depth (the bottom goes down steep) I touched something large and solid. I swam down to look. But the sweep and scour of the surf churns the fine bottom-sand to pale cloud. I could see only a dark outline, a pinnacle or even a dome, projecting from the sand. It had apparently ornamental projections, perhaps spikes or crockets. I could feel them. The legends were true! I was actually touching a spire or belfry of some drowned priory. What a discovery! What a letter to write to the *East Anglian Daily Times* (of Ipswich). American visitor discovers lost sacristy of Saxmund (or Uffa, or Eadwald, or the Venerable Bede; I never can remember the names of those Scandinavians).

I emerged breathless, balanced tip-toe on the peak of mysterious archeology, and waved to the matron on

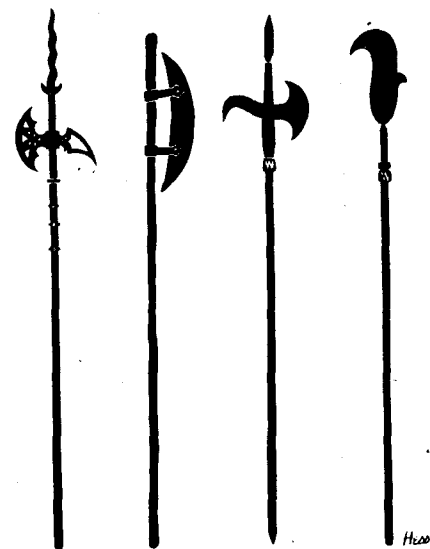
shore. Look, Ma, I'm dancing, was the purport of my gestures.

She was naturally curious about such capers. "Is it as shallow as that?"

"I'm standing on a bell-tower," I exulted. "See if you can hear the bells."

I dived again, and in the sandy smother I tried to make out some hollow in my belfry. It seemed solid, except for knobs and horns which I fingered zealously. When I came up for air the weather did seem a little breezy. Also it was getting toward lunch, and we didn't know whether our taxi would charge by distance or by simple effusion of time. The younger pair, too far down the strand to have shared my eureka's, were already clothing. I came out and did the same.

We returned by the proper route, along the beach to where the lane climbed a gentle circuiting slope. Carrying damp underwear we discussed the great discovery. "Extraordinary," I was saying. "It might have been the absolute tip of some decorated spire.



I was actually standing on the spikes. I danced on them."

At the opening of the lane were great rolls of rusted wire that had been peeled off the beach. My eye fell on a wooden signboard, a good deal weathered but very legible. I print it not in its own large capitals, but in the lettering of this text; so you won't read it prematurely, and can get the shock I did: Very great danger. Submarine mines.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

OLD FOLKS AT HOME

Fannie Gross, of Asheville, North Carolina, asks you to identify ten famous old folks of literature by the facts presented below. Allowing five points for each character named and another five for either the story or the author, a score of sixty is par, seventy is very good, and eighty or better is excellent. Answers on page 32.

1. Although her younger sister had eloped to Paris in her youth, this lady lived on to the end in the old family home in Bursley.
2. His fortune dissipated by his faithless daughters, he spent his old age on the third floor of a middle-class boarding house.
3. The only way the family of this old man could get him to leave his home in Oklahoma was by putting two table-spoons of soothing syrup in his coffee.
4. In her baroque palace this Peruvian noblewoman wrote letters that became famous to her beautiful daughter, who did not love her.
5. He took great pride in sitting before his cottage door telling his grandchildren of a famous victory won by the Duke of Marlborough.
6. This old lady, who was always pitying herself, kept house on a boat for the family of her deceased husband's partner.
7. Having wasted his wealth entertaining fair-weather friends, he retired to a cave in the woods, hating everybody.
8. After traveling through seven Southern states for eight years, this gray-haired Negro slave finally found his way back to his home in Tommeysville, Georgia.
9. This old doctor, who had once hobnobbed with rulers, was exiled twenty-three days journey from his native city and forbidden to take one step outside his allotted area.
10. He was welcomed back to the Maplewood Home for the Aged after a court of law had proved he was not insane.