

Three Ballads from Spain

*The Popular Front poets of Spain
find things to sing about even now*

Adapted by Rolfe Humphries

THESE POEMS are taken from a collection entitled, *The Balladry of the Civil War*, published in the December number of the French magazine *Commune*. Spanish poets, hitherto divided by various literary tendencies, have united, in the hour of struggle, to revive the old ballad form as a medium for carrying the heroic story of modern Spain. Audiences of fifty thousand have listened to the poet Rafael Alberti reading these ballads. I have not seen the Spanish originals, except for the poem by Pla y Beltran, but have worked from the French versions made by Rolland-Simon, G. Pillement, and Gabriel Audisio; in doing so, I have used a good deal of license in paraphrasing, abridging, and adapting, so that in the strictest sense of the word, the poems are not offered as exact translations. But I hope I have not done violence to the spirit of the originals.—R. H.

The Armored Train (For the Railway Militia)

Rock and pony across the slopes,
Avila's high plateaus nearby,
Shrapnel bursting in wind and dust,
Symbol of clenched fist lifted high:
Trenches breaking the mountainside,
Summits gutted with mine and scar,
Platform, revetment, and ambushade,
All of the works of the art of war.

Setting sun on the aeroplanes,
Ground all gold in the slanting light—
Thunder across the high plateau,
Smoke as black as the heart of night,
Greenish flames in the ruddy air,
Cannon-hearted, the armored train
Blasts the Avilan mountainside,
The air is choked with the dusty rain.

The rearguard's batteries answer back,
Mortar-din and torpedo-noise,
Machine-guns batter the rocky flanks,
Here come Comrade Mangada's boys,
Here come the boys, along the line,
Ravine and mountain, the armored train,—
Clear the road for the conquering poor,
Open the right of way to Spain!

Dirty traffickers, off the track!
Fascist traitors, and all your crew,
Wretchedness, hunger, and tears, stand back,
The armored train will run over you!

Out of our sorrow, out of our joy,
Blossoms the future life of Spain:
Thundering over the high plateau,
Out of the way for the armored train!

And in words of steel, shout, "Hail, all hail,
Hail to the warriors of the rail!"

JOSE HERRERA.

French translation by Gabriel Audisio.

Ballad of the New Conquest of Granada

Granada, who will see you?
Not the Abencerrages,
The ones who hold you captive.

A bloody river thickens
Along your lowly alleys,
Staining with hate and struggle
The whiteness of your houses.

Granada, who will see you
Sacked by the Moors and taken?

Girls with their breasts cut off
Don't run to look from windows:
The tortures of the martyr
Are slow, and keep them waiting.

The Moorish king should see you
Sacked by the Moors and taken.

Green grows Valencia plain,
And greener still Granada.
The men who sow these acres
Are in the high Sierra.

Riders from our own cities
Converge upon Granada.

O city of the Carmens,
Sweet basil and carnation,
Low in the shade of sorrow
But hoping still for freedom!



Arthur Getz

Riding from North to Southland
In every kind of weather
The Andalusian riders
Come to surround Granada.

O countrymen, O fighters,
Lands that my pony tramples,
Generals without honor
Will never sack and take you.

And while the leader sighs
And the Alhambra trembles
The ring of horses' hoofs
Resounds from night to morning.

Only tomorrow's rose
Will see Granada taken.

PLA Y BELTRAN.

French translation by Rolland-Simon.

For Saturnino Ruiz, Printer by Trade

Here am I, among the books
Made in my own printing-shop.
These have passed between your hands,
Line by line, and leaf by leaf.

Still I see you, in the shop,
As you were before the war,
Still I see you, hard at work,
Toiler both of hand and brain.

Here's a book from Lorca's pen,
The first poems he ever wrote,
Set by you, and given life
By the power of the machine.

You and Lorca shared my days,
Printers, poets, all together.
Him they murdered at Granada,
And you fell at Somosierra.

But I often see you still
Strong and glorious in my sight,
Lorca with the martyr's palm,
You enhaloed in the light.

Hero of the working class,
Saturnino, printer, friend;
Fighters dying standing up
Live beyond the battle's end.

MANUEL ALTOLAGUIRRE.

French translation by G. Pillement.

A Last Word on Wally

*Our court reporter finds that
the game was worth the candle*

By Robert Forsythe

AT A RECENT meeting of the League for the Abolition of Great Britain, I was asked by the chairman to say the last word in the matter of Simpson, Windsor, Canterbury, and Baldwin. This is it.

I'll confess that in the beginning I was confused. Quite aside from my resentment at the treatment of Our Little Lady of the Sorrows from Baltimore, I suffered from a severe romantic stroke which mightily nigh did me in. As I have noted before, on any question of the validity of love, I wish to be counted as for it. In its place, sex is also nice. The fact that the king had been friendly with my countrymen did not weigh greatly with me, because I am not a chauvinist and I also knew people who knew these particular countrymen. Briefly, you may have them.

However, I am even less an admirer of that solid old befeater known as Stanley Baldwin and of his incredibly more vigorous befeating wife, Mrs. Stanley Baldwin. Try as I may, Stanley does not touch me. Mr. Eden kept well out of this bout, which was kind of him because I should not like to be compelled to give an opinion on Mr. Eden, suspecting him of corsets. It came down, therefore, to a question of the king and Stanley, and it must be admitted that Stanley had David on the boat almost quicker than was decent. For this and his general stuffiness, I could censure Baldwin, but maybe it was for the best.

The trouble with the whole affair was that people wouldn't keep lined up properly. The usual English crowd is easily managed and will stand stolidly in line from Wednesday until Friday for a chance to see a revival of *Charley's Aunt*, but on this occasion the leaping about was nothing short of scandalous. Just when it appeared that the king was the only friend left of the working man, you would find Sir Oswald Mosley and Lord Rothermere lurking back of him in the shadows. The presence of Lord Rothermere might be explained on the ground that His Ludship has never once been right in all his life, but that is tossing the thing about too lightly. In any fairly

conducted competition, Rothermere would certainly come forth with honors in stupidity, but his instincts for the lousy are too pronounced to be ignored. Where Rothermere stands is no place for an honorable man.

Continued reflection upon this state of affairs finally convinced me that love was not enough. There was the possibility, of course, that Rothermere was in the pay of the cabinet, knowing that England would as soon ask a recount on the Battle of Trafalgar as abide with Rothy, but that was giving his Ludship credit for astuteness, which is insane. It could only be that Rothermere and Beaverbrook and Mosley had something in mind. It was at this point that I recalled I was not a royalist and had never been a royalist and began kicking myself for letting Cupid make a fool of me. In this case, I am forced to conclude that even if Baldwin was wrong he was right. I base this on my newly formulated theory of whatever a king wants, don't let him have it. It's a simple thesis, but nothing from Forsythe at least was ever more profound. Being kind to a king has simply no sense to it. The only good kings are living on the Riviera. They love it, their subjects don't have to look at them any more, and it is an arrangement which must surely have a divine tint about it.

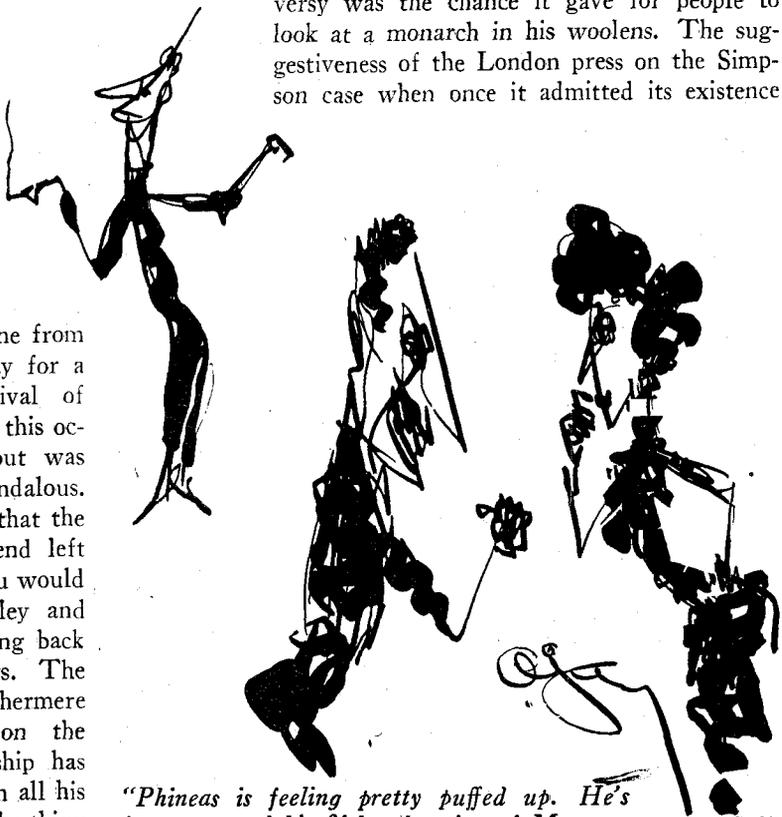
Another excellent thing about the controversy was the chance it gave for people to look at a monarch in his woollens. The suggestiveness of the London press on the Simpson case when once it admitted its existence

was only matched by the discussions in London society about the capabilities of the parties in question. For the first time since the late days of Queen Victoria, the king's name could be mentioned in the House of Parliament without loud cries of Order! Order! from gentlemen looking more like sealyhams than statesmen. The idea that the empire has already forgotten the incident is nonsense. The defection of David Windsor gave the Crown an unearthly wallop, and it may be only a few years before the Right Honorable Gentlemen of the Left will be as free to mention the new king as their predecessors once were to comment on Albert, who was Queen Victoria's consort. Albert stood for practically everything, and the queen got off little better. It is hard to believe but true. Those happy days may return sooner than we expect.

Altogether, the Simpson affair was worth it. When the archbishop of Canterbury mouthed his words to the microphone and said nasty things about David which he should have been saying months earlier if he was a man of proper kidney, the retort from the nation was suspiciously Bronxian. The Church may have won a victory, but two or three more such triumphs and the Salvation Army will undoubtedly take over the Abbey. My own conviction is that nothing so wonderful as the archbishop's speech has occurred since Hitler turned the Japanese into Aryans. From our point of view, it could just as easily have been written by the Comintern. In fact, it is my firm belief that we have a spy in all religious circles lately, manufacturing liturgical doctrine. Surely nothing else can explain it.

Summing it up, it may be said that the tragedy of David's departure can be borne even by his friends of the working class on the basis of the effect his actions have had on the idea of monarchy. He may have been double-crossed by the upper crust, but they haven't done themselves a great service. The prospect of anybody swooning over the new Windsor is remote, and about the most the empire can be said to have salvaged from the wreck is the belief that kings may be necessary but only in the same way that a queen is required for a Mardi Gras.

We may drop a tear for David on the theory that he was a good guy when he had it, but we must at the same time be firm with ourselves. The Simpson affair afforded Mr. Eden an excellent opportunity of double-crossing loyalist Spain in the company of Mussolini, but it also put the seal of approval on that old adage of the Sardonicians: Never give a king an even break.



"Phineas is feeling pretty puffed up. He's just engraved his fifth refutation of Marx on the head of a pin."