

The Defeat Inside Victory

ONE HUMANITY. By Howard E. Kershner. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1943. 81 pp. \$1.25.

Reviewed by BONARO W. OVERSTREET

The freedom-loving people of Europe are slowly dying from starvation. The proud boast of the Nazis that they are a superior race is coming true. Those who have enough to eat are indeed superior to the tuberculosis-ridden, undersized, misshapen bodies of the starved inhabitants of the occupied countries. . . . With the birthrate dropping and the infant mortality rate rising like a thermometer in a burning building, whole populations are being cut off at the source.

THAT is the first paragraph of this small book by Howard E. Kershner, Director of the American Friends Service Committee in Europe, 1939-1942. Also, it is the text of the book: the children are dying: the children in whom the democratic spirit should be finding, in Europe, its tomorrow's embodiment.

The question that is put to us by this book is so direct and simple that it startles into new awareness the apathetic mind and heart: With the children dead—or with their bodies and minds hopelessly twisted by malnutrition—where do the peoples who are now ostensibly fighting for freedom expect to find the human material for tomorrow's free society? To avoid that question; or to wrap it up in diplomatic clap-trap; or to explain all the difficulties in the way of feeding the children—no one of these dubious expedients will bring back to life children who are dead; nor can all

the astute diplomacy in the world conjure up out of unliving stuff a new body of living democrats to people a world that is presumably being made ready for democracy.

This is not the sort of book I like to review. For the review should properly consist of four words only: *Read it for yourself.* To my mind, Mr. Kershner has effectively answered all the diplomatic and "practical" objections to feeding the children of the occupied countries. He has shown how the next generation of Europe can be saved without aiding the present enemy. He has, moreover, weighed the present diplomatic temper of our own country and of Great Britain in a delicate scale of understanding and has shown what the lay citizen can do to induce on the part of his government an active concern about Europe's children. This small book might well be called a primer of human decency.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 508)

DON MARQUIS:

THE RETURN OF ARCHY

(from archy's life of mehitabel)

i have been organizing the insects
the ants wasps
bees cockroaches
mosquitoes
for a revolt against mankind

.....
from my seat

on the edge of a bowl of beef stew
i launch the thunderous
molecule
that smites a cosmos into bits

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

WEATHER REPORTS

Now that the government has permitted once more the broadcasting of weather reports, we offer you ten famous samples from the realm of poetry. Can you identify the poem from which each was taken and also the author? Allowing five points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, 80 or better is excellent. You'll find the answers on page 20.

1. The day is cold, and dark, and dreary; it rains, and the wind is never weary.
2. The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year, of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere.
3. Announced by all the trumpets of the sky, arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields, seems nowhere to alight.
4. The sea is calm tonight, the tide is full, the moon lies fair upon the Straights.
5. The year's at the spring and day's at the morn; morning's at seven; the hill-side's dew-pearled.
6. Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright.
7. No sun—no moon! No morn—no noon—no dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day.
8. It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, the holy time is quiet as a Nun breathless with adoration.
9. De wind she blow from nor'—eas'—wes'—de sout' wind she blow too.
10. How beautifully blue the sky, the glass is rising very high, continue fine I hope it may, and yet it rained but yesterday.

Northerners are amazed
Southerners chuckle—
at

I CAN GO
HOME
AGAIN

By ARTHUR G. POWELL



HERE'S the citizen of the Sovereign State of Georgia to the life, and "the most paradoxical culture in the U S. — at once barbarous, virile and generous." Judge Powell tells about his backwoods neighbors and their fascinated interest in homicide and religion in a book that's full of violence, racy language, tall tales, dry wit and truth. \$3.00

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SRL Inaugurates Classroom Service

The Saturday Review of Literature has inaugurated a new classroom service, which is directed by Carrie Belle Parks, of State Teachers College, Indiana, Pa. For teachers of English in high schools and colleges, Miss Parks has prepared a manual of suggestions for use of The Saturday Review in the classroom. Also available is a special monthly bulletin for teachers using the service. The Saturday Review has made for teachers a special student subscription rate—6 issues, 50 cents, 12 issues, \$1, for bulk orders shipped to one name. A free copy for the instructor is included.

The Phoenix Nest

ROBERT BENCHLEY of Hollywood has written me that when he was at the age when a boy's voice cracks and he learns (or did learn, in 1905) Kipling by heart, hoping that it will make him a better boy,

I was greatly moved by my own rendition (in private) of the dedication to Wolcott Balestier which prefaced "Barrack-Room Ballads." The line that really got me was, of course: "*And they rise to their feet as He passes by, gentlemen unafraid,*" but, in order to get into that part of the routine, I had to learn the preceding lines which ran, I am sure:

*"And oftimes cometh our wise
Lord God, Master of every trade,
And tells them tales of the Seventh
Day, and of Edens newly
made."*

(I am sure, because I just checked on my old edition.)

Now, in thumbing through the new T. S. Eliot selections of Kipling, I naturally was pleased to note that he had included my favorite, but shocked to find that the line now reads:

"And tells them tales of His daily toil" instead of "the Seventh Day." At first, not having my boyhood edition at hand, I was driven slowly crazy trying to figure out why, for all these years, I had been thinking that it was "the Seventh Day." One doesn't just make up "the Seventh Day" out of one's own head like that. I could just as well have made up "the Second Front" or "Minetta Lane" if I were going to make up something. It was a great relief to me when I asked my son to look it up in the volumes of Kipling that belonged to Daddy in the bookcase by the stairs in the upper hall, and heard him read "the Seventh Day" over the telephone. (Long distance.)

Now the question is: Who changed "the Seventh Day" to "his daily toil" and why? Has the Seventh Day come to take on a Communistic meaning? It certainly isn't less fluid, and, although I don't quite know what it means in that connection, I like it better for poetry. Did Kipling change it in a revised edition before he died, or did T. S. Eliot? I don't think that Max Perkins did.

"Barrack Room Ballads" was published in 1892. My own edition is of 1902 (Methuen & Co., London) and the dedication there reads "And tells them tales of his daily toil," but I have seen the other version elsewhere. Just when Kipling changed it I can't find out. Further advices from Benchley, *via* dog-sled, have been that his edition is Doubleday, Page's, *circa* 1907, when he left home for Exeter. (*Ye Scribe* was then just thrust out into the cold world from the Sheffield Scientific School!) Anyway, Benchley still thinks "Seventh Day" better than

"daily toil," but R. K. has "daily toil" in "Rudyard Kipling's Verse, Definitive Edition, Doubleday, Doran, 1940." Can any reader throw further light?

Raymond M. Crosby, one of the illustrators I have most esteemed since I first met with his work in the *Yale Courant* of the late '90s, tells me that Alfred Ollivant told his publishers to put out only three copies of "Red Coat Captain," one for themselves, one for him, and one for sale. Apparently they ignored his request, for I picked up the first copy I ever got, in San Francisco back in about 1909. (The book was published by John Murray in London in 1907). Mr. Crosby also rebukes me for calling it a "children's book," in which he is quite right. He says that at the time it came out there was talk in England about its being a satire on British rule in India. He also remarks truly that "The Gentleman" is one of the few books without a female character in it.

An interesting question is raised by Victor S. Yarros, who sends me an article of his, published in *Unity*, and called "Editorial Writers as Hessians." At the risk of precipitating something again, here is the query: can editorial writers write as they please in the press? That is really what Mr. Yarros asks. They have "a passion for anonymity." There are several thousand of them in this country.

They love their work; they take pride in it and are envied by the average reporter, desk men, feature writer, and others on the force. But their position in this country is strictly anomalous. *They* seldom "write as they please" [Mr. Yarros is here referring to the title of Walter Duranty's book]. Many of them are content to take their ideas from the editor-in-chief, or the publisher, and supply only the manner, the style, the expression. Some seek to put a little of their own thought into the pieces they write. They feel no moral responsibility for their editorials. After all, they say, it is the paper that editorializes, and their own part is comparable to that played by the typesetter or the proofreader.

Mr. Yarros goes on to say,

Clearly, to this accommodating journalist, the professional writer is a Hessian, an adventurer, who cheerfully sells his skill to the highest bidder.

Then he speaks of other mature editorial writers who are not happy and blame the American practice of employing editorial writers without asking them whether they are conservatives, liberals, radicals, or revolutionists; whether they favor free trade or high protection, the single

gold standard or a managed currency, economic planning, or the system of private enterprise. It is a fact that when you apply for an editorial job, you are asked what your experience has been in that field, what education you have received, and what questions you are qualified to treat with reasonable competence. You are not asked whether you share the views expressed by the paper you wish to join and adorn. It is also a fact that in Europe the situation is different. No writer applies for an editorial job on a paper whose policies he disapproves. No British Liberal would seek a job on a Tory Paper, and no Tory would think of offering to write on politics for a Liberal newspaper. . . .

He goes on to say

Few editorial writers [American] like to be dubbed cranky or "difficult," no matter what the boss may say by way of reassurance. Finally, and above all, no editorial writer wants to surrender the major political topics to his colleagues and confine himself to minor editorials or to innocuous "fillers."

Also George Seldes has said, in *In Fact*, that

in almost every case where the press is 80 or 99 per cent for or against something, the men who write for the press are exactly on the opposite side. The press was 85 to 95 per cent against Roosevelt for President, the newspaper men 85 to 95 per cent for Roosevelt. . . . It is interesting to note that the men who write for the papers are against Hearst, McCormick, Patterson, Roy Howard, the rules of the Associated Press, Westbrook Pegler, and all labor-baiters.

Mr. Yarros says he is a retired editorial writer and thinks the whole subject is important, ethically and journalistically; that the situation is abnormal and paradoxical. As I have never been a newspaper editorial writer, I myself am not sufficiently familiar with the situation to express an opinion upon it. But I should like to hear others do so.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Longfellow: "The Rainy Day."
2. Bryant: "The Death of the Flowers."
3. Emerson: "The Snow-Storm."
4. Matthew Arnold: "Dover Beach."
5. Browning: "Pippa Passes."
6. Ernest Lawrence Thayer: "Casey at the Bat."
7. Thomas Hood: "No."
8. Wordsworth: "It Is a Beauteous Evening."
9. William Henry Drummond: The "Julie Plante."
10. W. S. Gilbert: Chatter Chorus, from "The Pirates of Penzance."