Catholic Courier 1939

JANUARY 12, 1939 NUMBER 2

With the Approbation of the
MOST REVEREND JAMES EDWARD KEARNEY, D.D.
Bishop of Rochester

CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION OF UNITED STATES
AFFILIATED TO N.C.W.C. NEWS SERVICE (WASHINGTON, D. C.)

J. C. MOONEY ..... Managing Editor
ROBERT J. McNAMARA, M.A., S.T.L. ..... Associate Editor
JOHN KIMBERLY ..... Manager
J. E. O'CONNOR ..... News Editor

MEMBER OF THE ROCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

[illegible] Single copies [illegible]. Foreign [illegible] Year.

[illegible] to discontinue the CATHOLIC COURIER must do so by written notice. Otherwise [illegible] and the subscriber will be held responsible for all [illegible] after the expiration date of their subscriptions. This is in accordance with the decision by the Supreme Court of the United States [illegible] Congress of March 3, 1879.

[illegible] by CATHOLIC COURIER and JOURNAL, Inc.
[illegible] Rochester, N. Y.
Phone [illegible]
[illegible] Journal Established 1889

THE CATHOLIC COURIER has my most enthusiastic approval. A [illegible] has become an essential part of the program of [illegible] every diocese. THE CATHOLIC COURIER should [illegible] Catholic home in this diocese. I find it hard to understand [illegible] who seem to be indifferent and unconcerned as to what is transpiring [illegible] throughout the world as it is [illegible] upon unreliable sources [illegible] need to seek for information whatever. Let us have [illegible] THE CATHOLIC COURIER in every Catholic home."
✠ JAMES E. KEARNEY, Bishop of Rochester.

The Spanish Embargo

[illegible] the effects of the radical organizations and [illegible] to have the Spanish embargo lifted calls for [illegible] signers to the petitions on Page One, this [illegible] to President and Congress to keep the em[illegible] and for more widespread dissemination of [illegible] Spain among fellow citizens.

[illegible] of the issue in Spain is evident [illegible] that took place in Washington this week. [illegible] individuals and groups are exerting [illegible] favor for, not only the so-called Loyal[illegible] Spain, but for the Soviet program gen[illegible] as well.

[illegible] handing out deliberate lies and half-[illegible] was to fill the gullible into be[illegible] Catholic Church is undisturbed in Spain [illegible] of lifting the embargo are solely in[illegible] cause of "democracy and peace."

[illegible] the side of American who want neutrality [illegible] who desire to ban shipment of arms to both [illegible] struggle is being heard. The New York [illegible] ran a long account of the Keep the Span[illegible] meeting in Washington, Monday, and [illegible] of prominent citizens to the Spanish Loyalist [illegible] and others who are trying to cover up on the [illegible] differences in Red Spain. (An account [illegible] appears in this issue also on Page One). [illegible] of the groups seeking to lift the embargo is [illegible]. Their organizations have been labelled [illegible]. Their success in this movement will mean [illegible] of true democracy in the United States. Act [illegible] their un-American activities and "Do The [illegible] For Democracy in Spain" by sending the peti[illegible] Page One to the President and to your Congressman.

Lenten Observance

[illegible] to all the faithful is participation in the [illegible] Church Unity Octave from January 18, Feast of [illegible] of St. Peter at Rome to January 25, Feast of the [illegible] of St. Paul.

[illegible] of prayer asking return to Catholic unity of [illegible] from communion with the Apostolic See has [illegible] of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI. It is a uni[illegible]

[illegible] Mark of the true Church. The principle of [illegible] in the Church is membership in the Mystic [illegible] which we are all members of the [illegible] Head (Paul 1 cor. 12, 27).

[illegible] originated by the Very Rev. Paul James Fran[illegible] of the Society of the Atonement at Gray[illegible] is an abundance of prayers being offered [illegible] of sheep without the fold.

[illegible] goal, however, to be reached must also be [illegible] good example on the part of Catholics.

[illegible] the Church watch closely the actions of [illegible] neighbors.

[illegible] are careless in the practice of their religion, [illegible] seen in questionable surroundings, if they con[illegible] divorce evil, if they disregard the law of God in [illegible] of birth, if they cannot intelligently answer ques[illegible] put to them in regard to their religion—Church Unity [illegible] that much farther into the future.

[illegible] prayers during the Octave should be accom[illegible] by exemplary actions at all times to assure the grace [illegible] coming as quickly as possible to all waiting [illegible].

Movies and 'Box-Office'

[illegible] been a bit disconcerting for New York film [illegible] have to turn down "Snow White and the Seven [illegible] the best movie of 1938 because some of them [illegible] about giving the preference to Walt Disney's [illegible] masterpiece over flesh and blood players.

[illegible] discouragement, however, can be no worse than that [illegible] in 1934 who predicted that when the [illegible] became influential the movies would have [illegible] "dirty movies" for the fewer who would attend [illegible] theatres.

[illegible] came true in a manner they least ex[illegible] the expressed belief of many producers that [illegible] started in motion pictures, without [illegible] creative type of films there would be no [illegible]. It was then they made the crack about [illegible] it is bound to please them in the pocket-[illegible] there realize that clean entertainment, [illegible] is produced now and then can be "box-[illegible]

[illegible] pictures produced, the forces of [illegible] their attention upon the evil and [illegible] American stage.

[illegible] objectionable plays. Of a [illegible] Burns Mantle, Daily News [illegible] of these dirty plays with [illegible] [illegible]—not its social [illegible]

[illegible] this play sounds a [illegible] never idle. [illegible] picture producers [illegible] and publishers [illegible] turning to [illegible] of literature [illegible] obtained in all [illegible]

Choirs and A Director

'ALONG THE WAY'

By Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S.J.

In the rather guiltless-of-liturgy days of my youth, I belonged to what was in the realest sort of sense a village choir. We were all volunteers. And we were mixed as to sex—male and female we made them in those days of the haphazard choirs—and I rather think we were mixed musically as well. I know that my first experience playing an organ was when I walked into the choir loft of old St. Catherine's in Chicago, sat down at the bench, and blasted forth in my first organ number. And the singers were in the main as well intentioned and as inexperienced.

We sang the popular masses of the period, Millard's, Farmer's and Gounod's, and if the basses improvised and the tenors faked, if the sopranos were numerous and the altos surprisingly rare, we sang with gusto and much was forgiven us because we cost the parish nothing except the patience of the congregation.

Well, into our choir walked one day a young matron with a magnificent soprano voice. What was more, she seemed to know what the music was all about. And we realized that we had found a leader, and we bowed to her baton, and humbled our maverick musical souls before her direction. She began by moving the rehearsals out of the choir loft, where the giggles were more frequent than edifying, and the gossip was rehearsed behind the organ while the soloists practiced the "Qui Tollis" in front of the organ, and the abuses that caused Rome to develop gray locks over church music flourished most ardently—and into her front parlor. There around a grand piano we rallied, and if we lavished in a bit of pietums of the day between the rehearsal of the Sanctus and the mastery of the Benedictus, no one had a right to be disedified.

She worked us hard for Christmas and Easter, and got results. I even took a few organ lessons to master the difference between piano and organ touch. And when she lifted her baton and called forth the best there was in us, for a crowd of amateurs we did very well indeed.

I remember during rehearsals seeing little faces peeking down at us choristers from the balustrade that led to the second floor. And I knew that our choir directress was also the mother of a charming and rapidly growing brood. Clearly, her magnificent soprano voice was called on for lullabies more frequently than it was for Tantum Ergos.

Once a year, as a treat to this volunteer choir, the pastor sent us on a theater party; and our directress brought us home to a delicious after-the-theater dinner party. Tastes may have been simpler then; but tables groaned under heavier dinners and I recall with approval her chicken and pastry and the variegated "trimmings" of the feast.

Well, liturgical choirs succeeded the willing if unrubrical volunteers. The children of our directress grew to fine and notable manhood, to graceful womanhood. I saw her at times, always charming, always interested in artistic things, but more and more the mother as years made her less the great soprano.

And now the word reaches me that she is dead.

Well, hers was a full life. She was one who might have been nationally known as a singer. She preferred to sing to her children; she was content to lift her voice in the little parish church in our small suburb. She was Catholic enough to think motherhood more important than the role of prima donna. She was more interested in her sons and daughters than in the operas she might have sung, the concerts which might have brought her the applause of the musical world.

She died just before Christmas.

I don't think that I am far wrong when I happily believe that her voice was added to the voice of Her that sang the Magnificat, and that with the great Cecelia and the wonderful women of our Catholic nurseries and cloisters, she joined the angels gladly in singing Heaven's Christmas hymns.

Choir directresses may be largely out of style. I know how welcome Mrs. Bernard McDevitt, lately of Chicago, now of God's eternal choir, must be among the singing saints and angels of eternity.

Al Smith

The Xavier Alumni Sodality, the list of whose members sounds like a Who's Who of New York Catholics, brought Mr. Al Smith and myself together on the same program. I'd never met Al Smith before; and it was a thrill, really, to see him face to face, to realize that the famous cigar is still much a reality, and to listen to that famous voice without the intermediary of the microphone.

Al Smith is really a great Catholic. I have heard few laymen that I thought could make the speech he made that evening on the relationship of the Blessed Virgin to modern manhood. It was sincere, simple, deeply felt, genuinely moving. How many political figures in the world could stand before an audience and tell them that the Mother of God is now, always one of the really important persons in human life?

When we parted after the program, Al Smith said to me: "You're from St. Louis, I hear."

I agreed.

"Well, if you ever happen to stop in a town called Sedalia, give it my regards. That's the place where I gave a speech lasting two and a half hours, and got seventeen votes!"

Put interesting tracts or leaflets into circulation around you; they will speak for themselves.

WHY?

Why do Catholics Object to the Reading of the Bible in the Public Schools?

* * *

Catholics object to the reading of the Protestant Bible in the public schools for the same reason that Protestants and unbelievers would object to the reading of the Catholic Bible in the public schools.

Experience proves that the reading of the Bible in the public schools usually has been made the occasion of introducing into the opening exercises of the school day all the elements of a Protestant religious service, a practice quite contrary to the spirit of the American Constitution.

If our non-Catholic friends really desire to have their children taught religion in school, they ought to do just what the Catholics are doing, make the sacrifice—and it is a sacrifice—of setting up and conducting a school system of their own where their Bible may be studied and their tenets taught without infringing upon the rights of others.

Why Should One go to Confession? Why Not go to God Directly?

* * *

Go directly to God—yes, that would be an easy way to do it, but God has prescribed how the penitent is to approach Him and hence that matter is no longer a matter of choice with us.

This whole attitude of mind rests upon a misconception of the manner in which God ordinarily deals with men. Christianity is a religion of meditation. We go to God through Christ, and we go to Christ through the person of those whom Christ has vested with His own power and commissioned to speak in His name.

God employs a priest to baptize; the priest is but the agent and instrument of God; it is God who confers the Grace of Baptism and blots out sin, not the priest, but it is through the priest that God accomplishes this effect. God could confer the Grace and forgiveness of Baptism directly if He so ordained, but He has willed to do so through the agency of man. The same is true with regard to the Eucharist. It is a priest who consecrates the Eucharist and offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but it is by the power and ordination of God that he does so.

It is the same with Confession. The priest is only the instrument, the intermediary, the delegate of God. He is the means appointed by God to bring the creature in communication with the Creator for the acknowledgment of sin and for its forgiveness. Sins are confessed to God, but through the priest; pardon of sin is granted by God, but through the priest. Anyone who makes a study of the Christian religion will find that this principle of mediation is a fundamental fact in all of God's dealings with man.

Fasting Seems Foolish to Me. Why Should One Not Eat Meat on Friday?

* * *

You confuse two different ideas. Fasting means to take but one full meal a day. A day on which flesh meat is forbidden is called a day of abstinence. All Fridays are days of abstinence, but only a few of them are fast days.

No Christian practice finds greater support in the Bible than that of fasting and abstinence. God enjoined abstinence upon Adam and Eve in Paradise when He forbade them to eat the fruit of a certain tree. Later on the Jews were forbidden to eat the flesh of certain animals and at stated times were not permitted to eat unleavened bread.

Moses through whom God gave His commandments to the chosen people, kept the first fast for forty days. Elias observed a similar fast. To show how pleased our Lord was at their lengthy penance, Moses and Elias were the only ones allowed to appear at His Transfiguration. Christ Himself fasted for forty days and forty nights Matt. 4, 2) and Christ is our model and exemplar in all things.

Beyond doubt the early Christians kept days of fast and abstinence. Witness St. Paul exhorting us, "Always to bear about in our body the mortification of Jesus" and telling us that, "If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." (Rom. 8, 13.)

The reformers of the sixteenth century charged the Church with confusing repentence and penance and proclaimed the works of penance unnecessary. But this is a great mistake for sincerity of repentence is proved by penance. The truth of God is eternal. "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold" (Tobias 12, 8)

Certainly a juicy beefsteak for breakfast on a Friday morning is just as tasty as on any other day of the week. But to refrain from flesh meat on Friday in memory of Our Lord Who redeemed us in His own Flesh on a Friday is a penance that proves our repentence and shows our love and gratitude to that Lord Who died for us.

Defenders of the Faith,
Pilot Grove, Mo.

Diocesan Recordings

"Do the Decent Thing for Democracy in Spain" by signing and sending the Keep the Spanish Embargo petition on page one—and at the same time give evidence to our representatives in Washington of the large number there are who are deeply concerned over making democracy work in this country.

* * *

"In the old days," says the Southwest Courier, "the smokehouse was near the barn. Now it's where the bridge party meets."

* * *

Copies of the Keep the Spanish Embargo Committee Petition may be obtained from members of Rochester Council, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Activities Committee, or at the K. of C. headquarters, Columbus Civic Centre, 50 Chestnut Street, Rochester.

* * *

A wide circle of friends accumulated during his 20 years of service in the public schools, is mourning the death of an outstanding layman, this week, Dr. Joseph P. O'Hern, whose funeral was held on Monday. Of Doctor O'Hern, his former pastor at St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles F. Shay, now pastor of Holy Rosary Church, said on learning of his death: "Joe was a sincere scholar, an educated gentleman and a good Catholic." This tribute from his pastor of 15 years is eloquent of the fine type of layman that Dr. O'Hern was.

* * *

"And speaking of the Sunday Masses," says a current parish bulletin, "there are too many coming too often tardy to the late Masses. Check your watches—and check your consciences."

Feast Days

Sunday, January 15 — ST. PAUL THE FIRST HERMIT.

Monday, January 16—ST. HONORATUS, ARCHBISHOP.

Tuesday, January 17—ST. ANTHONY, PATRIARCH OF MONKS.

Wednesday, January 18—ST. PETER'S CHAIR IN ROME.

Thursday, January 19 — ST. CANUTUS, KING, MARTYR.

Friday, January 20—ST. SEBASTIAN, MARTYR.

Saturday, January 21—ST. AGNES, VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

* * *

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for someone else.

* * *

A male movie star, always thinking of his public, had an X-ray of his teeth retouched before showing it to his dentist.

* * *

The only time some men can carry a tune is when they sing their own praises.—Dayton Journal-Herald.

Gloomy Moment In History

Today It is a gloomy moment in history. Not for many years — not in the lifetime of most men who read this has there been so much grave and deep apprehension, never has the future seemed so inculculable as at this time.

In our own country there is universal commercial prostration and panic and thousands of our poorest fellow citizens are turned out against the approaching winter without employment, and without prospect of it.

In France the political caldron seethes and bubbles with uncertainty. Russia hangs as usual, like a cloud, dark and silent upon the horizon of Europe; while all the energies, resources and influences of the British Empire are sorely tried, and are yet to be tried more sorely, in coping with the vast and deadly disturbed relations in China.

It is a solemn moment, and no man can feel an indifference—which, happily, no man pretends to feel—in the issue of events.

Of our own troubles no man can see the end. They are, fortunately, as yet mainly commercial; and if we are to lose only money, and by painful poverty to be taught wisdom—the wisdom of honor, of faith, of sympathy and of charity no man need seriously to despair.

And yet the very haste to be rich, which is the occasion of this widespread calamity, has also tended to destroy the moral forces with which we are to resist and subdue the calamity.

* * *

When worrying too much about today says Case and Comment, the Lawyers' Magazine, you will be interested to know that the above article is reprinted from Harper's Weekly, Vol. I, Page 642, of the issue dated October 10, 1857, 81 years ago.

Social Action

RIGHTS OF LABOR AND OTHERS.

"Labor has the right and should be accorded recognition of the right to establish its own organizations to bargain collectively, to choose freely its own representatives. It has its just claims to a reasonable living wage, to healthful working conditions, to security of employment without unfair discrimination. It may enforce its just demands by effective means, but these must always be consonant with the rights of others, the dictates of conscience and God's law." A Christian Attitude on Social Problems N.C.W.C. Washington, D. C.)

OUR SHARE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

"To take no share in public matters would be equally as wrong (We speak in general) as not to have concern for, or not to bestow labor upon, the common good." The State and the Church (N.C.W.C. Washington, D. C.)

Catholic Courage

'LIBRARY SIGNPOST'

EPIPHANY means a "showing" or a "manifestation." In the liturgy it refers to the "showing" of Christ—first to the Gentiles in the person of the Wise Men, then to the world at the beginning of His public life when He was baptized in the Jordan, and thirdly to the witnesses of His first miracle at the wedding feast of Cana.

While we observe these "epiphanies" of our Blessed Lord, we should be careful to pray that He may be "shown" forth in our own lives. Right now, this world of ours needs strong witnesses to Christ. Some countries have already presented them: Spain and Russia and Mexico have offered the witness of spilt blood. The Catholics of the United States may yet avert such a drastic hour from themselves, only if the witness of their own upright and faithful lives be strong. We must live mightily and courageously in the spirit of Christ. We must abhor sin, as offending God and as handicapping our own power for good. We must "hunger and thirst after justice." Only so will our enemies, who are getting more numerous and more bitter every day, really find out that we are not bluffing.

Dear Lord, by Thy Epiphany, show forth the strength of Thy power in our lives. May the witness of our words and deeds make us worthy comrades of those valiant ones who have already given the witness of their blood!

* * *

More and more, the Catholic Evidence Library is offering to its patrons the better books of non-Catholic authors, especially those which uphold the proper values of life in the face of a decadent world. One of the latest of these is "The Horse and Buggy Doctor," by Dr. Arthur E. Hertzler. Miss Mary Agnes Dougherty has prepared the following review for this column:

The House and Buggy Doctor
by Arthur E. Hertzler, M. D.

Dr. Hertzler's book is an entertaining account of the craft of medicine as it was practiced by the country doctor in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The author explains that it is not an autobiography, when the narrative becomes personal, it is only to give it point and directness.

The book throws little light on Dr. Hertzler's own philosophy of life in its relation to medical practice, perhaps there are expedient reasons why it does not. The fundamental ethical principles of the medical profession are illustrated, of course, in the narrative But one feels that the thoughts and feelings which the experience of a lifetime brings to a wise man should be given fuller expression than Dr Hertzler allows himself in his book.

He begins his account with the diphtheria epidemics when medical science was helpless to meet the tragic appeals for relief If he makes a dubious comment about passive reliance on God during moments of unknown peril, we can correct it by asserting a sound Christian principle that we should pray as if everything depended on God, and work as if everything depended on ourselves. Thus may the afflicted pray, and doctors keep on working hard to discover more cures.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book describes his "kitchen surgery" and the night rides through snow storms with horse and buggy; an old-fashioned Western movie is not more thrilling. In those days, a family illness was taken in charge by the whole neighborhood; this spirit of being their "brother's keeper" cheered the young doctor after his long and dangerous rides.

He bemoans the passing of the family doctor, who used to know a lot more about illness than its organic causes. If the clinical attitude replaces him, it will be a sad day for those who need human understanding almost as much as therapeutic treatment.

Sometimes Dr. Hertzler sounds cynical in treating of human relationships, and yet he is hopeful enough to offer some good solutions, as, for instance, for the prevention of divorce. In the latter part of the book he insists upon the responsibilities and nobility of marriage and parenthood as against a "tomcat" philosophy which is loud but not nice. He takes to task rather sharply, but generally justifiably, his own profession, as well as lawyers, and clergymen, the latter because he had gained the unfortunate impression in childhood that Christianity and Puritanism were the same.

Good supplementary reading after this book would be Fr. D'Arcy's "Pain and the Providence of God"; Fr. McNabb's "The Craft of Suffering," and Fr. Bonnar's "The Catholic Doctor."

* * *

We of the Library hope to see all our friends at Emmet Lavery's lecture next Friday, the 20th, at 8:15, in the ballroom of the Columbus Civic Centre. It will be for the benefit of the Library. Mr. Lavery's topic will be the prospects and opportunities of a genuine Catholic Theatre here in America. Another department of the CATHOLIC COURIER today cites Mr. Lavery's qualifications, which make him, perhaps, the best Catholic layman in the country for the development of this ideal.

I know him personally, and have heard him as a speaker with perfect, good-natured control over a large and motley conference group over which he presided as chairman. He has a generous share of what people these days call "personality"; he is full of live ideas and plans I bring him here as no "gift-horse"; I have looked him in the mouth, and I can guarantee that he has the "goods"

Will we see you next Friday evening?

Rev. Bendict Ehmann

STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY

LET'S CLEAN HOUSE IN 1939

Sursum Corda

By REV. JAMES M. GILLIS, C.S.P., Editor, The Catholic World

A priest from America on an important mission to various European countries remained for a considerable length of time in Germany, studying the tragic situation. As he was bidding goodbye to his hosts, one dear old lady exclaimed, "Surely, Father, you are not going back to America?" "Why not?" Because in America they lynch all good people!"

Silly, of course. Absurd. Wicked of the propagandists to stuff such nonsense into the brains of poor gullible people.

But after we have had the laugh that goes with such stories—a rather sickly, sorry laugh—and when we have relieved our mind of some "snappy retort" about the Nazis, would it not be well to ask ourselves to what degree we are responsible for the

Five Years Ago

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From the Jan. 11, 1934 Issue

The choir of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music, College of the Sacred Heart, New York City, gave a demonstration concert to priests, nuns and choirmasters at Nazareth Academy.

* * *

Very Rev. Charles B. Schrantz of the Society of St. Sulpice, former head of St. Charles College and one time teacher of Archbishop Mooney, died in his 88th year.

* * *

Sister Miriam David, formerly Esther Donavan, of St. Mary's parish, Auburn, and Sister Marie Edith, Maryknoll Sisters, Maryknoll, N. Y., came home on a brief visit.

* * *

The dramatic Club of Nazareth College presented a play entitled "Who's The Lucky Man?" at an afternoon tea. The play was directed by Miss Estelle Mehan.

* * *

The ordination of the Rev. James C McAniff son of Mr and Mrs. Bernard J. McAniff, 28 Normandy Ave., took place in the Chapel of the North American College in Rome. The priest's mother witnessed the ceremony.

* * *

All the children of Corpus Christi School were present for the funeral of little Dorothy Heinzle, six year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Heinzle, who was struck and killed in an auto accident.

Clips

It was a great American, Walt Whitman, who said: "I give you myself, more precious than money."

Seeing the effect of money on most people, it's no wonder Providence allows so few of us to have any.

You can't budget for friendship: it's a divine accident, like first love. What you can do is to make yourself fit to be a friend.

A man's college days teach him that in life the average play succeeds better if he lets the wife carry the ball.—Detroit Free Press.

Some people think when they have great fortunes they have achieved complete happiness. That is not true.

Mercy never brings anyone any happiness. In some cases a thermometer wouldn't work. In others it would burst.

Will we see you next Friday evening?

Rev. Bendict Ehmann

crazy opinion of America that prevails not only in Germany but in Italy and Ireland and South America and Japan in fact, in almost the whole world?

TRUTH IN LIBEL

In libel there is often a grain of truth. We don't lynch all good people, but we do lynch some innocent human being. Good or bad, innocent or guilty, seven were lynched in the United States during 1938.

Besides lynching, another American crime that is played up to a fare-you-well by European papers and other instruments of anti-American propaganda is banditry. Another is racketeering. Another is hi-jacking, more prevalent during the prohibition era than now, but not yet by any means extinct.

Yet another blot on the American escutcheon is free and easy divorce. Well, if not free, at least easy and frequent. Divorce has become an epidemic. The stench of it is all over the land. We may say of it what the king in "Hamlet" says, "My offense is rank, it smells to heaven." The nauseating odor of it rises especially in two places, in Hollywood and in what is called perhaps sardonically "high society." Mr. Chesterton used to say that he could have some little patience with the "Bohemians" of the Latin quarter, where they make no pretense of observing any law or any civilized custom in regard to sex-relations, but that he had only contempt for those who, while observing the forms of law, live in polygamy or in what amounts to promiscuity.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Now, who is responsible for those laws? Do the American people at large approve of Reno, where a gloss of respectability is put upon adulterers and adulteresses? Do we really believe those people "respectable" when they have had the Reno varnish applied?

And why do we tolerate the vicious institution of the night club, an institution for the promotion of drunkenness and lechery? And burlesque, which is nothing less than the antechamber to the brothel?

As if these reasons for shame were not enough, we have Ponzi, and Capone, and Whitney, and now the incredible Musica. The scandal of it reaches far and wide—and high. So, there is some justification in the Nazi accusation that our system is rotten from top to bottom. If not wholly rotten, it is spotted all over with corruption.

LOOK AT CONDITIONS

Instead of laughing, therefore, or getting angry when Europe exaggerates and distorts our sins and vices and crimes, why not take a good honest look at conditions and set to work to clean out the dirt?

If we don't clean our own house, some one will come along and clean it for us, sooner or later. Here we are "all het up" over Nazi spies in our midst; and about Communist infiltrations, and Fascist propaganda and what not. We might indeed very well commence by sweeping all anti-American influences off the continent into the ocean. That is one requisite of a good house-cleaning. But it is by no means all that we must do. We must give our attention to other things that are making us ridiculous abroad and providing the enemy with a plausible reason to malign us.

What these things are we all know. Any one who claims not to know could learn by merely opening his eyes or, for that matter, opening his nostrils. "Something is rotten in the State of Denmark," said Hamlet. Much is rotten in these States of America. Shakespeare didn't see any way to clean up the corruption in the court of Elsinore except by cluttering up the stage with corpses. If we don't like that crude way—a sort of promiscuous murder—we had better get busy in some better way. "The sooner the quicker." Why not right now in 1939?

(Copyright, 1939, N.C.W.C.)