

THE LEAST OF THESE Feeling in our hearts an emotion closely akin to awe, we open this month's PNL with excerpts from a letter, beautiful, terrible, moving even in translation. We are grateful to Miss Ruth P. Coventry for allowing us to share it with you, even while we wish that it might also be shared with all our sleek and prosperous America and hope that you will read it to your friends.

Berlin, June 14, 1947

Dear Miss Coventry:

With unbounded joy and to my indescribable surprise I received just now your wonderful CARE package, for which I wish to express my deepest and most wholehearted thanks. As yet I have no idea how I came to receive this honor and how it is possible that such a kind person opens her heart to the great need which exists here, living as you do half a world away from here. I still hope to solve this mystery and I should be endlessly happy if you would enlighten me in this regard.

.....We looked forward to spring and warmth. Now we have it and still cannot be glad because the ghost of hunger always haunts us. Our bodies are completely worn out, we are spiritually broken and we have no more courage to face the dubious future which can only bring us new disappointments and trouble. Believe me, Miss Coventry, you would be doing us great good if you would send us an ampule of poison to release us from this terrible misery. Especially for us so-called "race-refugees" life is very difficult because we get no help from any side.....

As far as our demoralized spirit and emaciated bodies permit, we are trying to start life anew.....With present-day rationing, one cannot work, to say nothing of satisfying one's hunger.....So we can no longer say that we live, rather that we simply vegetate, mostly from secretive meals at random, which must be kept unknown to one's neighbors, when one can get a piece of dry bread.

How fabulous the contents of the CARE package were to us, you can hardly imagine, and how wonderful the meals which we prepared from it--like paradise.....Our clothes are patched over and over. One can no longer call them clothes. A needle is treasured like a gem. Thus life goes from day to day, a hopeless bitter battle.....

HIROSHIMA August 6, 1947 was the second anniversary of the unforgettable bombing of Hiroshima. With our own guilt and that of our countrymen very much in mind, with the clouds of a peace-less present and fearful future casting shadows upon us, we vowed once more in our small way to do everything we could to lessen the woes and the tensions which seem daily to increase.

Even in our most pessimistic moments we perceive truth in the words of Jane Addams, of which Gladys Walser recently reminded us, "NOTHING COULD BE WORSE THAN THE FEAR THAT ONE HAD STOPPED TOO SOON AND NOT EXPENDED EVERY EFFORT THAT MIGHT HAVE HELPED THE WORLD."

WATER COLORS A friend of a friend of ours has done some watercolors, much admired by us, of scenes in Florida and New England. (There are some Nantucket scenes we particularly covet!) She has consented to sell some of them and has generously offered to give half the proceeds to the Quakers for overseas relief.

If you are interested, won't you get in touch with us. They would adorn any wall and can, moreover, be easily photographed and made into Christmas cards. We have seen some of the cards and are much impressed by their beauty, by their inexpensiveness, and by the fact that in acquiring them we are doing something to help those who need it.

MORE ON THE ARTS Oddly enough, we were disheartened to read the other day in a Syracuse newspaper the following statement: "The Chicago Symphony Opera management announces Kirsten Flagstad in her first postwar operatic appearance in this country in Chicago Sunday afternoon, Nov. 16....." We congratulate The Chicago Symphony even while we grieve not to have seen an announcement that Miss Flagstad can again be heard this fall at the Met! We hope that the Met is misjudging American audiences and that proof will be found in the middle west.

Still vivid in our memory is the first picket line we ever crossed. 'Twas in Cleveland last spring in front of a building in which Kirsten Flagstad was about to give a small and appreciative audience one of the most glorious concerts of her career. Among the signs carried by the pickets was one reading "Don't look now; your swastika is showing"! As we paid tribute to a great and generous artist, we still writhed at the discourtesy of our compatriots.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION Soon after the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations convenes on August 25th, the Committee for the Universal Recognition of Conscientious Objection to Military Service will urge that there be included in the proposed International Bill of Rights an article which reads thus: "THE RIGHT OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO REFUSE MILITARY SERVICE IN OBEDIENCE TO CONSCIENCE SHALL BE RECOGNIZED."

If you approve and would like to affix your name to a petition to the United Nations, will you not write Abraham Kaufman, 5 Beekman St., Room 1028, New York 7, N.Y.

ABC Elementary as ABC is the fact that peace and love rarely if ever spring from discomfort, hunger or fatigue or chill. Therefore a recent report of General Lucius D. Clay comes as no surprise to us. Yet we were sorry to learn that "Germans roving the countryside in quest of food for the coming winter have fought gun battles with German police assigned to guard crops in the American zone." We are sorry that anyone has to forage for food--whether for himself or his wife or his son or his daughter or his mother or his father. Then we began to wonder: Is being sorry all we can do?

BASIC NECESSITIES The Mayor's Committee announces a city-wide clothing drive to be carried on between September 7th and 15th. We are still receiving good clean used clothing daily at 722 N. Salina St. and this summer will pick up what you have at your home if you call us. The need continues and will not lessen when the winter sets in.

Let us remind you also that CARE packages can still be sent through us, and that hunger has not ceased to reign in Europe.

NOTE OF HOPE We learned via PEACE NEWS that "Julius Meyer, head of the Jewish branch in Berlin of the Victims of Fascism, sees hope in Polish-German relations where others usually see only continuing hate."

"Recalling the relations of German and Polish victims in the Auschwitz Camp, Mr. Meyer thought a more or less complete reconciliation was possible between Poland and Germany--despite the bitterness of the present boundary issue and the uprooting of populations on both sides. 'The present Prime Minister in Warsaw, Mr. Cyankiewicz, was a member of our Resistance Committee at Auschwitz,' said Mr. Meyer. 'He fought side by side with German comrades against the Nazis and surely will not forget their comradeship.'"

When individuals work together on something greater than either in which both are interested, differences are forgotten and lasting comradeship is formed. So it is in Europe; so it is here, too, in the States. Can we not somehow use this lesson to heal friction in our own community? Do you know people whom you could draw together to sew or knit for those in need? We could furnish you with word pictures which cannot but stir their imaginations and awaken in them a sense of the value of such work.

WRONG TRACK? In his new book A Crisis of Culture, reviewed in the Christian Century for July 23, 1947, John Macmurray maintains that to try to solve the world's problems "through political and economic planning is ridiculous; and perhaps the Soviet government shows more insight than our own representatives on this point. A democratic solution can only be found at the lowest level--through the gradual formation of a common tradition and a common way of life throughout the world." If the good professor is right--and certainly he is not all wrong--we might well spend more time on the problem of bringing about interglobal friendships involving, not missionary work, but a cultural interchange. What do you think?

AGAIN WE TREMBLE! In the FPA Bulletin for July 18, Blair Bolles quotes Senator Edward V. Robertson, Republican of Wyoming, who said of the bill creating a Secretary of National Defense, "The real intent of this bill is to create a vast new military empire, one in which ambitious men will wield greater power over the military establishment than has ever been heretofore granted to non-elected individuals, and one which will wield untrammelled power over the entire social and economic structure of the nation." Secretary Forrestal, our eyes are upon you!

HERE'S TO SHORT! We present an orchid to Representative Dewey Short, Republican of Missouri, who alone among the members of the House Armed Service Committee voted against the Universal Military Training bill. Despite his dissent, action can be readily taken when Congress reconvenes. Shall we marshal the opposition now?

The Christian Century for August 6th urges us to recall findings unanimously reported by a House subcommittee that "the war department, its personnel and civilian employees have gone beyond the limits of their proper duty of providing factual information to the people and the Congress (here concerning UMT) and have engaged in propagandea supported by taxpayers' money to influence legislation." So the war department resorts to illegal means to fasten conscription on the nation; let us see that the means fail.

CAMP DANBY We are pleased to announce that the scholarship to Camp Danby has been awarded to Ruth Wylie, of Clinton, N. Y. We congratulate her and wish her a pleasant and rewarding time. And to all of you who have helped make Ruth's scholarship possible we extend sincere thanks and also congratulations.

BOOK END This month we recommend two pamphlets hot off the presses: HOW AMERICA IS BEING MILITARIZED by Oswald Garrison Villard, 15¢, and QUAKERS AND PEACE by Ruth Freeman, 50¢. Why not stop in and get your copies tomorrow. 'Twould be a good time to see our new office if you've not already done so.

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