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## “ROLL OUT!”

HOLGER J. KOCH.

“ . . . The coming age is the unknown and we are already in it.

“The people of this country have faced the unknown before: on Plymouth Rock; in the caravans that moved to Oregon. A thousand monuments across our continent celebrate the conquest of the unknown. The history of the pioneers dwarfs the history of our wars. It, and not they, is the American legend, the source of our ballads. It is our ‘moral equivalent for war’—the facing and filling, of an emptiness”. — Dorothy Thompson.

In the history of every race and people we can trace the evolution of characteristic traits back to a beginning when that trait was not an established way of life or a traditional attitude, but a conscious choice; the voluntary selection of direction or objective from a number of possible choices. This original choice is subjected to modification along the way, caused by a changing environment or by an inner change of attitude, so that a constant re-orientation is necessary to avoid drifting off at a tangent, following false trails and will-of-the-wisps besetting the path. If the guiding star or ultimate objective is one of high principle requiring the subjection of immediate gain or fancy to the attainment of a distant, shining goal, the corrective shift becomes a re-dedication.

The American people—even on a comparatively short march—has been sorely tempted to veer from the path toward the establishment of a social order embodying the principles of freedom and equality. Fleeing from spiritual bondage in Europe the Puritans itched to make the New World safe for Puritanism rather than for conscience. Jefferson and the writers of the Constitution saw the pitfalls of intolerance and bigotry and reset the course toward freedom of conscience and religion. Having escaped from economic slavery in Europe the feeling of being masters of slaves acted as a heady wine on erstwhile serfs who gave the wild horses of greed and lust for power the reins, heading down the dizzy incline toward the precipice of

human and national disintegration. An Abraham Lincoln and a bloody civil war were required in order to swing the nation back to its first principle that every human being is endowed with certain inalienable rights—no matter what you think of him.

Since then we have tried our hand at political corruption, imperialism, pressure-group tyranny and dollar-diplomacy, all to be rejected eventually by the people's innate sense of direction, and the course repeatedly altered by re-orientation and re-dedication to principles of human rights, dignity and justice. The future will be no less uncertain than the past, but the realization that we have escaped the quick-sands of self-indulgence and the pitfalls of self-aggrandizement in our national evolution—even by the skin of our teeth—may bolster our hope that the early choice of noble principles may in time become so vital a part of our national spirit that deviations from them can only temporarily be endured.

Human nature instinctively shrinks from entering empty or unknown spaces both physically and spiritually. A pioneer in any field must possess that courage to follow a dream to the end of the world. Because the discovery and building of America constituted a succession of ventures into the unknown, she had to call upon the best the race could produce in order to man her ships and her prairie schooners, her legislative halls and her public forums. At British ports, at Cumberland Gap, at South Pass and Independence, Mo., at Concord and Fort Sumter each pioneer had to decide for himself whether to follow the dream or return to the fleshpots of security. And invariably after the first gasp of wonder or apprehension, the command that rolled along the wagon train and re-echoed from stout hearts and granite cliffs was always a confident and defiant, “Roll Out!”

There was always a price. Minds and bodies broke under the strain, but the vast emptiness became America. She put a high price on her favors because she wanted only the best. These pioneers became the creators of the American tradition of daring to face the obstacles of the unknown, because they had already overcome them in their hearts by conquering their fear of them.

We are now entering the emptiness of our post-war world. Ravaged physically and spiritually. Empty of ways

and means for building the sort of life we have always wanted. Almost empty of hope. We have entered through the tortuous path of a global war. This valley stretching out before us MUST be "it". This must be the end of the trail. We should never be able to cross another mountain range alive. We must now set our common house in order. The task is enormous, for all our problems are so interlocking that one cannot be solved unless all are solved. The race problem and the international relations problem, the political and the economic problems.

But no matter at what point in the scale from top to bottom the problems are attacked, the builders in clearing away the debris find no firm footing for any reform before they reach the rock bottom of individual integrity and the will to peace. It was the essential egoism of the individual and his will to separate survival that rotted away the foundation for the world which has just collapsed. For little weaknesses in the social structure are created by a little egoism and great weaknesses by masses of it. While men live by and for themselves alone, they are as the shifting sands of the desert and can support no social structure. An element of mutuality must come into their common existence to fuse them into a body having the firmness of the rock. After that all things will be comparatively simple. Anything that tends to solidify human society at its foundation, that is, the immediate relationship between the individual and the man on his right and his left, stabilizes to the extent of its intensity the entire structure to its very apex.

It is hopeless to attempt the equitable distribution of goods and services among the millions who individually are bent upon acquiring not only their share but all they can lay their hands on; or to administer justice over a great number of people who individually prefer privileges. The remedy for all the ills of mankind, as far as they are within man's power to correct, lies in the necessity for each man to cease to be a danger and a threat to his environment—even to his enemies. If we fail here, all is lost; if we win here we can build any sort of world we choose within the bounds of physical limitations.

In this connection it is worth noticing that the really great personalities in the history of human advance have not been the great fighters who could deliver the most crushing blows, but those who with ordinary ability combined the ability to absorb punishment without losing their faith in men—including their tormentors. Paul, St. Francis, Washington, Paine, Lincoln, Roosevelt, to mention a few at random. If any of these had given way to the normal desire to "get even" with his persecutors, he would have failed in the task before him. Not one of these was gifted above hundreds of thousands of their fellows—but where are the rest? Would it be fantastic to assume that innumerable men and women would be comparably "important" were it not for their inability to "write off" petty irritations and back-stabbing, undeniably uncomfortable but by no means fatal unless they incite the recipient to retaliation?

If this is even partially true, then our insistence on more education, higher standard of living, our rights to this and to that is really wide of the mark. In fact, more education, more scientific knowledge, greater production, largely serves to make egoistic humanity more dangerous and destructive than ever, so that unless we can match

the atomic bomb with a like release of moral energy for good through the breaking down of the ego, we may as well consider time as definitely running out,—which in that case may be just as well.

Enemies can be destroyed by violence, but never enmity, and no enemy is really dangerous until we begin to hate him. We need all the help we can get to overcome the animal instinct of self-preservation which is in our blood. We may never master it, but until we do, a tortured humanity must suffer in a hell of its own making. We are facing again that vast emptiness of the great unknown: the future. This is another Great Divide, so, in the heroic American tradition: — "ROLL OUT!"

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## The Rise and Decline of a Community

Prof. A. C. NIELSEN, Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa

The hills and the valleys were there. Oak creek was there. The good earth was there and the homes had been built upon it. The fences were there and it seemed that they were too high. True, they kept the cows and horses from trespassing, but people too had difficulty getting over and through. The we-feeling was weak.

Danes had settled along the Oak creek in the seventies. Most of the virgin prairie was broken and frame houses had replaced the sod houses. The village of Nysted, with the store, creamery, church and school, had been built. The people had helped each other do the pioneering work, but the old pioneer fellowship was passing away. The good fences were too high for the human spirit to pass over or through.

It was in 1898 that he came to be their pastor. He came from Denmark. In that country he was born and had received all his education. The only language he spoke was Danish. He had grown up near a folk school and this great movement had quickened his spirit with a determination to be of service. He was handsome, dynamic and a natural-born leader. Like Caesar he came, he saw, he conquered. His interests, however, were not of a material nature. His weapon was the word of God, and his battle-field the human soul.

He had not been there long till neighbor told neighbor that the new preacher had something to say and knew how to say it. On each Sunday there were fewer vacant pews.

We children went with our parents. In the church there was always a "solemn hush" until the pastor opened with prayer. This was followed by one of the grand, old Danish hymns. The pastor was a good singer, and under his leadership the people sang the beautiful hymns well. The adults had learned the hymns in Denmark and many of them they knew by heart.

Very soon he began to work with the young people. He called a meeting at the parsonage and taught them the folk songs, all in the Danish. He was an excellent reader and the first book he read was "Ben Hur". On a certain evening of each week they met to hear more of that dramatic story. Since new ones came for each meeting, he told a brief synopsis each time of what had gone before.

In a hall in the village he gathered the young people for gymnastics. He had had special training in this work and he was an excellent leader. The young people came faithfully, and it was not long till their steps seemed lighter and they held their heads a little higher.

For the boys under fourteen he organized a rifle club. Under his supervision we met on Sunday afternoons for practice. How proud a boy was when he hit the bull's eye and received a word of praise from the preacher.

The pastor had not been in the community long until he began to talk to the farmers about the necessity of having what was called a vacation school. They agreed. We children went to it during the months of May and June. Our parents took us out of the public school during the month of May in order that we might attend. They considered this school of more importance than the public school.

The aim of this school was to teach the children the cultural heritage of Denmark. It was a wise thing as it helped to bring children and parents closer together. This vacation school helped us to appreciate the things they held dear. We learned to love their religion and many of the songs and stories they had learned to love in Denmark.

Our pastor secured an excellent teacher for this vacation school. He had received his education in Denmark, and was much better educated than were most of the public school teachers of those days. He too had come under the influences of the folk schools in the old country.

For me this vacation school was a rich experience. It must be understood that only the Danish language was used for instruction. We children learned to sing the lovely spiritual and folk songs of Denmark. There were scores and scores of them and we children sang them with delight.

When we started school all of us could speak the Danish language. In a short while we were able to read the Danish stories. We used books printed in Denmark. Generally the books used in this Danish school were superior to those used in the public school at that time.

The best thing about the school was the story hour. The teacher did not read the story. He knew that a story is more effective if it is well told. There were Bible stories and stories of heroes in Danish history. There were stories of old Norse gods. Thor became so vivid to us that we could see him throw his hammer, or hear him dashing across the heavens causing the roll of thunder.

The teacher was a master at telling stories, especially the fairy tales of H. C. Andersen. How we laughed when he told the story of Little Claus and Big Claus. On the other hand, I can remember how difficult it was to keep the tears back when he told the story of the mother whose only child was taken by the grim reaper, and how she was willing to give all and go to the ends of the world to get her child back. Then there was the tragic story of the little match girl. — I can still see the school master as he stood there almost transfigured by the joy of telling a good story to eager listeners. It was vitalized education.

In the village there was a building that had originally been built for a folk school along Danish lines. But the school had not been particularly successful. It was the most natural thing for the new pastor to be interested in getting a folk school started. That school had meant so

much to him in Denmark. But the buildings and grounds were in a sad state of repair. It was not long till the farmers were working under his direction getting things back into a better condition. A lawn was seeded, flowers and shrubs were planted and a simple system of irrigation was installed. The old building was remodelled and an addition was built to it. In the course of a year or two, the place was a beauty spot on the barren Nebraska prairies.

Since this is not the story of the Nysted Folk School, little will be said about it. It did, however, influence the community. It was the meeting place of the people. Here they received much of their inspiration.

Usually there was a three-month school term for young men in winter, and a three-month term for young women in spring. Most of the young people of the community attended some time or other. But young people from other Danish communities in the middle west also came. It was a boarding school. Those in attendance lived like one large family. Rarely were there more than fifty young people enrolled at one time.

The true folk school is a cultural school. Its aim is to enlighten and inspire. The folk school leaders have always maintained that what you love is more important than what you know. They further maintain that when an intelligent person is wide awake, he can find his facts as he needs them; but that facts have no value if a person does not know how, or does not care to use them.

The pastor had now succeeded in getting his folk school built. In winter it was filled to capacity with young men, 18-25 years of age. In spring the young women filled it. Its words, songs and spirit were felt throughout the whole neighborhood.

During most of the year there was a meeting at the folk school at least once a week. When the school was in session, the farmers came to see plays put on by the students, or to hear talks by the pastor and faculty members. They also came to sing. It became a singing community. They used the old Danish Folk Songbook. The songs in this were grouped under the following: Morning Songs, Evening Songs, Christmas Songs, The Christian and Human Life, Nature and Man, Daily Life and Work, Home and Child Life, Youth and Play, Danes in America, Denmark and the Danish People, The School and Folk Enlightenment, Songs about Songs, Love Songs, Danish History, Bible History, World and Church History. There were more than five hundred songs in this book. Many of them the people learned by heart. They sang about two hundred of them. There were songs for all occasions. For a wedding some one in the community would surely write a song, and when such a song was sung for the first time the celebration reached its peak.

In our day one would quite naturally ask what the pastor and other speakers talked about to these immigrant farmers. They did not talk to them about the latest methods in raising more corn and hogs. They talked to them about the great and good men of the past and present. They read poetry to these farm men and women. They told them the story of the great poets and of great poetry. As a boy I heard them tell the story of Shakespeare's plays. It was the first time that I heard such names as Macbeth and Hamlet. I do not mean to say that all these farmers listened eagerly all the time. I recall that some slept the sweet sleep of the innocent.

It was the conviction of these leaders that if the people acquired the right attitudes toward life, they would better be able to solve the problems of life.

Essentially they were right. In a few years the community was different. Men and women sang more. You could find good books in their homes. They became better farmers too. They planted shrubbery and flowers around their homes. They hung pretty pictures on the walls of their rooms.

The hills and the valleys were still there, and the fences still showed where a man's land began. But somehow the fences did not seem as high. They were easier to cross. Neighbor liked neighbor better. This resulted in more cooperation. Those farmers had such cooperative enterprises as a creamery, elevator, shipping association, credit union, fire insurance and others. In short, there was much social and economic solidarity. When people of a community worship together, work together, sing together, you may be pretty sure that life is good.

These good people had built a little Denmark. But the merciless minutes ticked away, and year followed year. One by one the old pioneers went to their long home and were laid to rest in the village cemetery.

The telephone and Rural Free Delivery came. The larger world hammered at the doors of this little community. The pastor left. Others came and went. Many young people left for the cities and came back with strange clothes and stranger ideas. The young people became conscious of being foreigners, and as that feeling grew they became reluctant to sing the Danish songs and hymns. People who could not speak Danish bought farms. Little by little the group solidarity became weaker. The creamery closed and the folk school found it more and more difficult to get students. Finally it closed and weeds grew where flowers had grown. The building still stands, and on the walls to this day hang some of the pictures that were hung there by loving hands many years ago. When I last visited the empty halls, I thought for a moment I heard the echo of the grand, old folk songs in the Danish tongue.

Was this little Denmark a success? Yes, while it lasted. But it could not last. It was inevitable that it would be overwhelmed by the larger society outside.

Many people think that such an alien pocket was an evil. I think not. Strong enlightened citizens are an asset to any nation. Furthermore, we children through our acquaintance with the cultural heritage of our parents came to love and respect it and them. We were spared the tragedy of those first generation children who came to despise their foreign-born parents because they look and act so out of place in America. We were spared the heartache of so many immigrants and children in our large cities. So often these children fail to see that their parents have anything of value. Their parents wear strange clothes and love queer things. So often these children reject the cultural heritage of their parents, and yet fail to discover the best in America.

When I reached the age of fourteen, I was familiar with, yes, loved many Danish, hymns and stories. My parents had social status in our community. Both father and mother were important persons in our little world. I was proud of being their son. How I beamed when father or mother came to visit our school. When I accompanied father to a meeting of farmers and he stood up and ex-

pressed his frank opinion, it never occurred to me that it was wrong for him to do that in the Danish language.

The fact that I had learned to speak the Danish language first did not make it more difficult for me to learn the English. The fact that I had learned to love good poetry and prose in the Danish, made it all the easier for me to appreciate Hawthorne, Emerson, Steinbeck and Edna St. Vincent Millay at a later day.

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## Freedom in Education

AAGE MØLLER, Solvang, Calif.

Fifty years ago I went to school and now I teach children. That gives me a chance to compare the children of yesterday and today. I see no essential difference. The child of today plays with planes. I played with wagons. He eats ice cream and I stuffed myself with wild berries. He swims in the lake, so did I. He becomes sex conscious like I did. He is to be conscripted while I heard all about the soldiers. He belongs to the state and the church. So did I. His country is the U.S.A., it was also mine.

There is a difference, however. In the school of my childhood there was a receptivity which the modern child simply does not have. My teacher wasn't unusual, she was not dramatic, nor was she brilliant. She had no pet schemes. She was an honest, devoted woman who cared very much for thirty children who grew up in the backwoods and resembled strikingly the chipmunks, squirrels and partridges. The essence of her teaching was the communication of the human story. She started with the Jews and Egyptians, going through the cycles and eras until we were at our own doorstep. Her narration was something like Ernie Pyle's books, romantic, yet very realistic. We took flight with Elijah but we experienced also the tragedy of life. She gave us facts; but she wove the symbols, dreams and myths around the facts. Such is history. It is both concrete and foliage, devastating fires and new sprouts.

She would stand at her desk telling the story and we children did not disturb her. We were in rapt attention. It was in those hours of concentrated acceptance that integration and molding took place. She planted the story in the soil of our being. It never occurred to her that we should remember the story, recite it or form our opinion about it. She knew the embryo had better be left unexposed.

The one reason why this could happen was that the patrons wanted it to happen. They maintained the little rustic school out of their few pennies besides paying their obligatory school tax because they wanted the children to receive that story. They wanted them to hear. They wanted them to be what they are—human soil. Their children, not adults. Their nerve system should be what nature wanted it to be—passive.

Another reason was that they respected the prerequisite for seeding the story of man in the womb of the next generation, namely freedom. A man and a woman must freely give and take if they are to transcend the animal stage. The one generation cannot in a personal way transmit its myths, dreams and accumulated knowledge to the next generation except in the atmosphere of freedom.

The teacher cannot perpetuate the story of Thoreau and Lincoln in a personal creative way unless she has freedom to stop and begin over again. The pupil must have the same freedom. They must have the freedom of the preacher and the parishioners who at any time can cease to preach or stay in the church. Without that freedom the story of man will not become blood of the child's blood. Under compulsion it is apt to produce hard, cynical ground.

The child of today is not different from the child of yore, but he has not experienced freedom where freedom is needed. For that reason he is nervous and history is boredom to him.

There can, of course, be no reasonable objection to compulsion as far as traffic laws and civic standards are concerned, but when a teacher passes into the almost unknown region of man's soul and spirit for the purpose of achieving growth and liberation he must have freedom. A person can come to know himself as a person and a personal member of humanity only in the element of freedom. There is nothing wrong in a subsidized institution of learning which demands civil discipline and obedience; but it must be all-out freedom where freedom is needed. Inherited values which can create new values can be conveyed only in freedom.

Freedom is the heartbeat of the United States, and while we pass into a more collectivized society it behooves us to realize what freedom is, where it is needed and what price must be paid for it.

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## Solvang Summer

ELLEN NIELSEN, Fresno, Calif.

Dear Holger:

In the old days we could dream, couldn't we? I know we used to talk poetry (which is part of a dream), especially Vachel Lindsay's "Exchanging Poems for Bread." Do you remember his dream of the small town? "Walking across this land I have found them." And in the future, in the poet's impossible future, little towns were to be known, each for their special beauty, their beautiful speciality. Well, small towns are still all alike, still big cities in miniature, cautious utilitarian, un-adventuresome. The radio and car have been the great levellers of whatever uniqueness small towns could possess. And "the youth problem" has made all towns, large and small, sisters under the skin. Paraphrasing a familiar phrase, "Breathes there a town with soul so dead that never to itself has said, 'We have a youth problem'."

But life IS unique and singular, it flows like a subterranean river beneath all surfaces; it is forever "det dybe, underfulde". Life is so munificent, so broadly flowing that it is amazing how little we plumb its depths, how content we are to sit on its banks and watch it pass.

How did you spend the summer in Solvang, you might ask; what happened? And I could say quickly (and how could the words convey anything of significance to you): Well, we could hear Aage Møller every Sunday. George Petersen has a great old live oak growing out of his cemented driveway and it is kept alive and watered through a hole no larger than a dinner-plate; we talked with Ibsens about

a hymn and the song, "Somren Bliver Evig Omsider"; it rained unexpectedly one night and summer rains are so unusual that we thought squirrels were running across the roof; peace was declared and the Danish baker in his baker's hat ran down the street to ring the church-bell; we climbed steep little ladders to the projection room where Paul runs the movies; the doctor across the street died during the night and we did not know of it until the next night; we saw the movie Summer Storm\*; we went down to see Ole Sørensens; Leo put new rings in our car.

But you do not mention Atterdag, you might say, what about summer camp? Ah yes . . . but that was life CON-TRIVED. The times are out of joint. In my opinion (and it is a poor one) using the folk school in these times is holding up an impatient traffic for a horse and buggy. Or should it be said this way:

"We have the snaffle and the curb all right  
But where's the bloody horse?"

Spiritually speaking we are pedestrians, physically we are stream-lined. Or to use another metaphor: wave lengths have changed, the big stations are Facts, Action and Science and you cannot dial out these interfering stations. We, our age (already in the past tense) are part of "melodien som blev væk". And when we try to dial that melody (for it was a wonderful one) the young sit with pained politeness . . . but they do not HEAR. I have always blamed the young, "now when I was young, etc". But this summer I heard, faintly, the sound of doom, I heard the wheels of the old buggy creaking while hot upon us, piled noisily into a sport coupe, youth panted to pass. And I knew what it was like to be an anachronism. (It sounds so much like antimacassar).

Summer camp with gym and sports and things to DO, yes.

But folk school with LISTENING, no. Too late and not yet. For us, yes, but not for the young in the 1945 sport model. We are become a small sound and gesture signifying nothing. The words SPIRIT and SOUL do not convey as much to them as the words psychiatry and complexes.

John Crowe Ransom in his pertinent essay, "Poets Without Laurels," says of poets (and was not poetry a very part of the folk school?) "I have a feeling that modernism is an unfortunate road for them to have taken. But it was an inevitable one." And he goes on: "Poets have had to become modern because the age is modern. The modernism envelopes them like a sea, or an air. Nothing in their thought can escape it." So poets are saying the old things in new ways; but most of them are saying new things in new ways, witness E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, T. S. Eliot, etc. Painters and poets made the break and it looks like chaos to us; heaven knows what will come of it.

Oh for a common language, for an old forgotten speech, for the thing Philip Sidney speaks of "With a tale, forsoothe he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corners."

Stuart Chase believes that the use we make of our language forms the sort of world we have. I hate a mass and mess of quotations but bear with me while I use one more. (And S. C. would shudder for I am picking out the highlights of 2 pages of orderly writing). "The cause is clear. The bottom has been reached. This is as far as the language mechanism goes. Contact comes before language

and cannot be spoken. The eye receives light-waves from the apple but says nothing. The apple, any apple, any object or act, is on the non-verbal level. . . . A group of synonyms does not define an object. Final identification is achieved only by pointing to the apple, touching it with the hand, seeing it with the eyes, tasting it with the mouth. . . . Here is the base from which all our proud words rise . . . every last one of them . . . and to it they must return and be refreshed. Failing this, **THEY WANDER INTO REGIONS WHERE THERE ARE NO APPLES** . . . no objects, no acts, and so they become airy chunks of nothing at all."

And in the eyes of the young, the dispassionate, disbelieving eyes, I see that they think we are wandering in regions of no apples, that when we speak of the spirit we are speaking airy chunks of nothing at all.

Education, to most of them, is not a state of being, not a thing to permeate their very being. It is an appendage to what they are, an article of clothing greatly in style, a weapon. "Why do you work so hard?" I asked a man this summer. He said, "I'm going to give my children the best education money can buy." But money, alas, cannot buy the best education. He, himself, is a very necessary part of that best education; nothing will make up, to those children, for the loss of their father as he gives up his whole time and energy to buying them that fine bauble. HE is unique; a young millionaire could not buy himself so unique a father.

The region of no apples. We are all in it. We are like George Petersen's oak tree, cemented all about.

Summer 1945. Only when we climb the ladder to the makeshift control room where Paul runs the movies does the summer fall into place. This room, full of what looks like iron lungs and the time-machine (the sort of machinery that looks out-moded and antique like oars and plumbing) is the Pandora's box from which (out of little cigar-box windows) comes all this life, death, hate and love, intrigue and hope and despair; here, on movie nights, life is lifted out of its round box by the reel and let loose upon the screen to harass or soothe or amuse you. Thus you can live life vicariously, only vaguely troubled by the dissatisfaction that all substitutes bring. Below us sit the silent, docile audience, faceless in the dark, as anonymous as "the people, yes", while on a dusty beam of light above them life is uncanned and put on the screen. Through a similar, inner box-like window I see my summer unfold, as miniature, as transient and fragmentary and already passe as yesterday's film.

I never thought of a person running off a movie. I imagined a button was pressed and machinery set in motion. But up here is Paul. During the day he works in the laundry; he is one of those small, sturdy Jyder capable of infinite and varied labor, he is as hardy as a "dragon-hest." When he stoops to pick up anything from the floor he bends easily at the waist, his knees do not bend. His face is very mobile, unprotected. The Jydske face is endlessly fascinating, it is a racially typed face, generally closed and shut and secretive, withdrawn, almost always tinged with a faint disdain. But, as with Paul, there are exceptions and life ripples across the features like water over a mirror.

Up here in the control room he moves quickly from one thing to another. He unwinds a reel of film, tiny Ameri-

can flags, thousands of them, all alike. But on the screen they will flutter, hang limp, lift up on a breeze. "Being we're still sort of celebrating," he says, "I'll run off the National Anthem first." Apparently one film is spliced to another for he snips here and there, puts films together (and this is priceless) not by a mechanical device but by spitting on the two parts and then clamping them together in a machine. "I'll run the trailer after the Micky Mouse," he says, spitting on the film, "and have the Star Spangled Banner (he spits again) first." He sees my astonished gaze. "It doesn't look so good," he says, spitting again, "but it works better than anything else." (And by such a little thing the most elaborate machine is defeated).

Buying and selling ceased while we stood in the store listening to the news of peace as it came over the radio. We stood rooted like a movie suddenly stopped, frozen in attitudes as incongruous as statues. The hand picking up the corn from the vegetable bin stays stretched out; the cashier-drawer just flung open does not close again, its excited PING still hangs in the air; the book-keeper's pencil is suspended above the open book; the yard goods held taut, unmeasured. . . . As soon as the news is told all the little figurines come to life again, as animated as puppets on a string. We walk down the street through a cacaphony of sounds; from every store comes the blare of the radio. Knots of people begin to form but we are shy with one another, we cannot name what it is we want to share, it is still outside us, a Thing, it is beyond us.

Ibsen works part time in the laundry and I can go over and talk to him through the hiss of steam as he mangles. "Jeg mangler," he says. To my eye he seems to mangle the same pair of jeans every day, he's always mangling jeans. He has very blue eyes and a wonderful, light sunny sense of humor; he is the epitome of Montaigne's "sweet reasonableness." We can jump straightway into any topic, he has an astonishing repertoire of interests and opinions. Even though he is in his sixties he is still curious and flexible and vulnerable to life; he does the mangling quite automatically. Above the pounding of the machine his thoughts roam far and wide.

Leo has the garage. He has a poker face, closed and guarded. We talk to him as he tears cars apart and puts them together again. We come in there a-flame with some new thought or idea to which he listens in disheartening silence. When we run down in the face of this stony disbelief he will ask a question or say something that throws a monkey-wrench into our perambulations. The screw MUST fit or he discards it. Yet again and again we throw ourselves against this precision. It is our secret desire to surprise his features into a lapse of caution.

The doctor across the street treated our little red cocker-spaniel last year. He stopped us one day and looked at Copper's infected paw. "Come around after visiting hours," he said, "and I'll see what I can do." The American Medical Society would not have approved. But when he had finished (rubber gloves, white coat and sterilized instruments) he got his seal of approval when Copper thankfully licked his hand.

So you see that in the vast cement yard of our age the tree DOES grow, in Brooklyn, in Solvang.

The night before we left Ibsen said, "Sing 'Herre jeg vil gerne tjene' to the West Denmark melody." But we did not know it.

Next day when we were packed and ready to leave I remembered: I was to find the melody. So down to Ole's where I have gone before for a new song. Their old 'dobe house with the thick walls (18 inches or more) lies in a hollow at the foot of a hill. It was noon and very warm. But inside the 'dobe walls it was cool, a fragrant, quiet coolness; somehow it reminded me of Bedstemor's house in Ashland. Irrationally I thought of Bedstemor's home-made cupboard with the screened doors. Along the top of the doors were ribbons of newspapers to rustle flies away; inside the cupboard was an everlasting dream of a cake frosted white and peppered with tiny colored candies. In all the summers I spent with Bedstemor I never remember anything in the little screened cupboard but the cake; I can still smell the sinfully luring, enticing fragrance of it. Our modern ice-box at home without the fringe of newspapers had none of the magic of this cupboard.

Mrs. Ole sat in the straightback chair beside the old organ and hummed the melody while I put it down through the five wavering lines I had drawn. Outside, Ole promptly dropped his work and came in and helped Mrs. Ole sing. Another night when we had come to hear her read a Jydsk story to us Ole had gone into another room to help her find just the right one to read. We could hear them pulling out books, paging them and laughing at the bits they read until Ole said, "Yes, that's the one . . ." And during the reading his lips sometimes moved soundlessly; if she hesitated at a word he could supply it instantly as children can who love and know a story by heart. (How well I understand Aage Møller when he said, "Det var store Sager naar vi Dreng skulde ned til Oles)."

When I had the notes written down I played it (I used to play just such an organ in the Ashland church, treading its carpeted pedals with ecstasy) and we all sang it. There I heard of Laurits Strandskov who composed it; he still lives in West Denmark. And when Ole had brought in some brown-speckled pears for us to eat (they were cool to the touch—not ice-box cooled but gently, darkly cooled in some secret cellar process), Mrs. Ole told us about Laurits Strandskov, about the trees and lakes and little paths of West Denmark, the sunny, tumbled fields, the dusty shadowed roads, the stillness, the seclusion; and I thought, yes, that would all go to make composers and poets and dreamers; and I thought I'll write to Laurits Strandskov and Holger. Here is your letter. — Ellen.

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\*) SUMMER STORM was unique having been only slightly exposed to Hollywood. There were touches of experiment upon it as though it were still in the act of becoming; not the usual Hollywood product delivered compact for your delectation. Nature becomes an integral part of it; the beautiful hunting scene, almost with the patina of an oil painting upon it, so that you might well wonder if life was patterned upon art or art upon life; the crude bin where the goat is milked, you can almost smell the manure (not at all Metro Goldwyn), the place where the maid stands in the doorway of the beach house and GRASSES WAVE ACROSS THE PICTURE . . . this is a stroke so simple, so unHollywood that, watching it, you are well nigh beside yourself and afterward run up and down the street asking people if they saw the grasses! There are scenes as familiar as paintings; in vain you

wrack your brains trying to remember where you've seen it all before. You haven't. It is utterly new, one of Hollywood's timid, illegitimate children without benefit of Culver City or fanfare; but such is the art of the picture that you recognize it as life, that is what is so faintly reminiscent. — And the maid! The man-servant! They actually ARE servants, not extras hired and made to look like servants and pushed out on the movie lot by De Mille. The smallest bit part is acted faithfully and honestly, with actual understanding. Anton Chekhov would have been pleased. Only the judge, in my estimation, was an exception; Hollywood WILL creep in, it is as hard to drown as a cat.

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## Harvest Idyll

MILDRED CRAIG, 220 N. Vine, Tucson, Ariz.

Last May our neighbor gave us some marble-size potatoes. We couldn't afford real seed potatoes; so one lovely afternoon when the air was fragrant with flowers, and glorious with sunshine, I planted them. It was such a happy experience; and each time I hoed them I enjoyed it as much.

Mother said we just wouldn't get anything out of that work, for the ground was poor and the potatoes poorer; but labor plus love, and all that means: sunshine, rain, a little work; and lo! we have quite a lot of potatoes, and they are so good!

It was interesting to note that where the vines were beautiful and green they were almost barren; they had given all their strength to surface showing; but where there was only a dead stalk—Oh such beautiful big potatoes! "He that loseth his life shall find it." From such hills come strength, and seed for next year's planting.

A garden helps me keep myself in place. For really there isn't much that I can do to make a garden. I choose and plant the seed. I cultivate—but my Partner does all the rest. This helps me when I work with people; I can do so little. I trust my seeds in gardening, but so often I worry over the seeds I plant. Oh, a garden helps me to remember my Partner in everything I do.

As I worked this afternoon on my knees to dig, it wasn't just a worshipper on his knees to a God; it was two comrades, two friends, two workmen rejoicing together. And as I gathered apples in the orchard with the autumn fragrance of promises fulfilled, my heart nearly burst with joy. We shall have a sacrament of love tonight. Perhaps the children will know better than we the inner meaning of baked potatoes and applesauce!

From The Walden Round Robin, Berea, Ohio.

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## AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Beginning with this issue THE VANGUARD AMERICAN will have 8 pages instead of the usual 4. This change was scheduled for Jan. 1 together with the invitation to subscribe; however, we feel the need for more space and greater variety of material at once—so here we are! Ed.

## Liberty Versus Faith

THORVALD T. L. RASMUSSEN, Solvang, Calif.

When Patrick Henry made his supreme effort to help save the American Colonies from imperialistic rule he shouted: "Give me liberty or give me death!" Similarly Christ, in his Supreme Sacrifice on the cross, called on God and said: "Father, into thy hands, I commend my Spirit."

In the above two examples of human stress and sacrifice we find the yearning in one for liberty and in the other for faith.

All through history the cry of the American people has been centered around the word: Liberty. If we investigate the history of the Danish people we find that their cry has been centered around the workings of the spiritual light and is therefore in direct connection with the word: Faith.

Which of the above two ways of life should we follow? Can we serve both of them?

If we follow the last named one we must realize that we are under bondage. In "faith" we cannot live by our own free will and be true to our purpose. If we follow the other way of life we are in constant danger of being overwhelmed by the various "isms" and other man-made schemes for living; for "liberty" is a versatile thing.

As an example in showing the existence of both of the above named ways of life we don't have to go any farther than to our own Danish-Americans: Don't we try to serve both ways of living? Aren't we, at the expense of our spiritual ideals and great Danish heritage, wavering between faith in our original purpose and following the comforts of our own free will? Don't many of the parents permit their children to follow their own way of life instead of stressing the importance of the "Danish" principles and truths? Don't we, when discussing the probability of reopening our folk schools, always have excuses such as lack of funds, closed immigration, a wish for "accredited courses," etc? Don't we fall prey to propaganda, disguised under the name of "patriotism" instead of being true to the predetermined course of "our vision"?

Liberty; what a glorious and refreshing feeling just to hear the sound of it! But, alas, when man has the privilege of having complete liberty he does not seem to be able to control it properly. Either he goes to the one extreme of taking too much of it so that he becomes greedy and thereby cannot appreciate it or he goes to the other extreme of taking it for granted and thereby is subject to losing it by powers that want to rob him of it.

Faith; what a dignified and spiritual feeling, just the mentioning of it brings to us! But, alas, when man has the privilege of having complete faith, it seems through the frailty of the human mind he is subject to waver from a determined course. Either he goes to the one extreme of being so engrossed in spiritual matters or he goes to the other extreme of losing faith and so lives in a stagnant state of mind.

We as Danish-Americans have received a special two-fold life-privilege by Destiny — the one, by inheritance through our Danish heritage of a way of life in the use of faith, and the other, as a gift through America of a way

of life in the use of liberty. If as a group, we could become conscious of a unity of purpose—a sort of regeneration—that could combine the two ways of life we would hold "the keys of the kingdom"; then we could truly be of service to America, our home and country.

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## The Atomic Bomb

HAROLD PETERSEN, Ringsted, Iowa.

Science has finally attained its seemingly obvious destiny, the destruction of the world. That the atomic bomb would come eventually has long been feared,—and nothing in this war is much of a surprise. Men of power seek cold, hard mathematicians and scientists to find means of laying into the dust those who stand in their way for their idea of progress.

Had the atomic bomb been dropped first by the Germans or the Japanese we would have been protesting today in bitter terms. We would have filled our papers with words expressing their barbarism. We would have had a right to do so. It grieves me that this monster of death and destruction should be introduced to the world by America. I know that it is not the will of the people. The people have not sanctioned it. Most of the people have thought it entirely fantastic when the possibility of such destruction was mentioned. The people of America would never, never, have approved it if they had had the privilege to decide beforehand. Why should the American people approve now?

The time has come when the American people raises its protest against all forms of secrecy. We have a right to know what we are fighting for, how we are fighting, and what the plans for the future of America and the world are. "We the people," must become more than oratory. It is the people who are sacrificing sons in this war, have they not also a right to determine how they are to fight?

The bomb has been dropped. Let us not fool ourselves and think that the blow was directed against Japan alone. All serious thinking people throughout the world will feel the blow and it will recoil and hit right back at America. The people—we, the people, will feel its effects for ages to come. America will no longer be thought of as the land of freedom and equality, but as public enemy No. 1 stooping to beastly methods to wipe out an enemy. Who benefits? No one. All that can be said is that hard, cold, mathematicians have dealt the soul of man a blow which will long be remembered. It now remains to be seen if Americans have become so calloused that they refuse to protest. If they have they have fought on the wrong side in this war. Then both Churchill's government and the United States should have joined the Nazis. We had been led to believe that only they were soulless—now I wonder if the world will find any nation with a soul except China and a few of the small, unimportant nations of the world—unimportant in the sense that they can exhibit no great military strength. If there is a living soul in the American people let us pray that it may express itself now. The world must know right now that there is a better America than that of the mathematical minded scientists and politicians and money men who devise atomic bombs.