

### THE NECESSITY OF LAUGHTER

Our gloriously progressive scientific age is truly wonderful. It has supplied us with all the criteria of civilization and culture in their highest degree, we are told. It has given us pressure cookers and flame throwers, fluorescent lighting and atom bombs, television sets and germ warfare. Yet with all these, there is still one very definite need; there remains one deficiency which the age of the test tube and calipers does not seem to be capable of filling. Our age stands today in need of just one thing that it may be the glory of all ages. Today the world cries for reform.

Fortunately there are those who see this need and are attempting to do something about it. These far seeing individuals inaugurate movements, make speeches, write books and edit periodicals, all of which, they tell us, are indispensable weapons in the war against the folly of modernism. They have sent out their call to arms and are forever reminding us that we must press into use every available weapon lest the enemy gain further advantages. We have heard their call and have answered it. Every available weapon has been turned on the enemy—every one, that is, except the most effective one of all. We have completely neglected laughter.

A reference to laughter as a weapon immediately brings the exclamation: "A preposterous absurdity. Laughter a weapon? Ridiculous!" Ridiculous? Why laughter is perhaps one of the most effective weapons at our disposal. "But", objects the well meaning sage of seriousness, "what can the humorist and his laughter do for us? What we need is philosophers. This is no laughing matter." And here is the seat of the pernicious heresy regarding laughter which is so prevalent today. Like our sage friend, most of us are not aware of the fact, that more than anything else, this whole business is a laughing matter. Indeed it is a matter which will require all the laughter we can arouse, for it seems that the only rational thing that the modern can be persuaded to do is to laugh. So he must be made to laugh. He must be made to laugh at himself, at the society in which he lives, at his employers, at his government, at all who would act at variance with reason.

People fail to realize that in laughter they possess a weapon, deadly in its efficacy, and entrusted to us for exposing the shams and hypocrisies of the world. They look upon it as a child's toy and have consequently stripped it of its thunder and given it to the children as a play-thing. But laughter is most certainly not a toy. It is a most lethal and devastating weapon, to be loaded with the fol-



lies of humanity, charged with the cordite of ridicule and fired by the hand of the satirist. Few there are who can remain standing in the face of such a weapon. We cannot for long, remain unaffected by ridicule. We may close our ears to the profound triads of the philosopher, but we cannot deafen ourselves to the laughter of the satirist. It will burn its way into our ears and sear our very soul. The tyrant who has crushed all opposition and extinguished all hope for deliverance in his subjects, still fears one thing. He fears laughter.

Our war against sophistry, then, has been entirely too laughless. To remedy this appalling situation, we must solicit the aid of the satirist, the Nemesis of every age who wreaks his vengeance on all who would do violence to humanity. The true humorist (for the satirist is the only true humorist) is needed today to drive men from their folly with the bow of laughter and the shafts of satire. We need the satirist today to laugh the materialist to scorn, to burn the heretics of secularism at the stake of ridicule, to drown the Communist in the sea of derision. The philosopher with the logician's syllogisms will draw a small audience, but the man who can make people laugh will pack the house. The humorist, then, has a duty to perform. Realizing that people want to laugh and will go to any extreme to have this desire satisfied, the man of humor must adopt the methods of the skillful satirist and point out to humanity its foibles and follies. Men cannot ignore the laughter of the satirist as they can the erudition of the philosopher. They will hear it and squirm until they can bear its pangs no longer. Then will they abandon their folly, for that is their only means of stopping the laughter which tortures them. To be safe from the satirist is to be purged of all incongruities, and when our age is purged of all its incongruities the war against sophistry will have been won. But the battle will be long and of doubtful outcome if we continue to neglect that weapon called laughter.

Our abuse of the gift of laughter does not end with neglect, sad to report. Today we are guilty of the most terrible sin of all against the virtue of humor. We are diabolically perverting it, for, as Msgr. Knox observes, "humor without satire is, strictly speaking, a perversion, the misuse of a sense. Laughter is a deadly explosive that was meant to be wrapped up in the cartridge of satire." It is when men of humor pick up this weapon called laughter, and, having no vendettas to work off with it, begin tossing it idly at a mark, that humor without satire takes its origin. This is the sin of many of our modern humorists. Such should not be the case however. The humorist can find vendettas aplenty about him and should not waste



his efforts perverting the purpose of his talent. His help is sorely needed today, for as the world cries out for reform, the frustrated reformers cry out even louder for assistance. The assistance they cry out for must come from the satirist, the laughing philosopher who cannot go unheard.

—FRANK SIGSWORTH '51

---

### AN AWAKENING

---

I slept and dreamt the world had changed;  
I woke to find it rearranged.  
And so I slept again . . .  
But now a voice was in my ear:  
"Rise up, the harvest time is near.  
The Cup has spilled its contents far;  
The Lamb has tamed the hounds of war.  
The world will change when you have changed.  
Arise, and speed the hour!"

L. O'HANLEY '51.

---

### THE WRONG TURN

---

The first bright rays of the warm June sun were now barely perceptible in the east. The solemn silence of the countryside was interrupted only by the purr of a motor and the occasional hoot of a drowsy owl. The leaves were hanging sleepily on the trees and the grass glistened with sparkling diamonds of dew as a bright new roadster, loaded down with fishing tackle, left the highway and turned down a side road. This was indeed the finest Sunday thus far in the summer. The day was meant for fishing.

As the sleek roadster moved swiftly along the damp pavement, Eddie Malone sat proudly at the wheel, a disturbed expression on his face. He had been driving his father's car now for five years, and the ease with which he handled it always inspired the admiration of his friends.

"You're really making time today, Eddie," came a voice from the back seat."

Eddie smiled but said nothing. He was not paying attention to the voices behind him. His mind was wandering. It must have been the early morning air. Or was it because today was Sunday? His thoughts took him back to the days when he had first met his companions who were