

planation of the disappearance of some millions of pounds' worth of war stores; but if not (by any chance) they would find loaded revolvers in the room opposite.

At this moment the "Luschbuze" entered the harbor, and two more were added to the bag.

That night every one of the culprits shot himself; during the next six months they were officially killed off. "Admiral A., promoted, died of heart disease while traveling to take over his new command." "Captain B., absent on leave, was thrown from his automobile and killed."

"Rear Admiral C. died of an operation following appendicitis." "Captain D. drowned at sea while attempting to save the life of a sailor who had fallen overboard," and so on—and First Lieutenant Finn commanded the "Luschbuze."

KEY.

Koupets is the Russian word for merchant. Marchand (Major). Bill, Nile. Dahet, Tchad. Ognoe, Congo. Erias, Zaïre. Melania, Nigeria. Galliein, France. Adoshaf, Fashoda. Kalnogenoy, Africa (ex Africa semper aliquid novi). Tetulla, Lutetia, Paris. Balustan, Bear country, Russia. "Luschbuze," "Demon Rum." Tsouke, Soaker. Sebastian, Sevastopol. Axine, Euxine. Black Sea. New Times, Novoe Vremya. Noblia, Albion, England. Nolout, Toulon. Atlam, Malta.

ON THE PASSING OF COMSTOCK

By Daniel Carson Goodman.

A FEW weeks ago I noticed several references to Anthony Comstock's passing as purveyor of morals to this community. Yesterday I noticed that this mortgage on individual liberty was not to be lifted, as was previously stated.

I have been struck by such details of the story as the apostrophization of his own troubles, the mortgage on his home, his perpetual right to the position, etc. And also by the fact that he was at variance with certain court officials, and that for their *les majeste* he intended to carry a complaint to the Bar Association.

It seems to me pitiable that Mr. Comstock should pass toward the end of his life-long job in this manner. I don't believe that he could have acted so consistently for so long a time unless he felt a certain righteousness in his actions. I believe that he honestly felt the role his own by endowments begotten, perhaps through personal travail in these artistic moral ineptitudes, and that thus fitted better than any other person he could blithely guide the youth of the land through this self-traversed labyrinth. It is not reasonable to suppose that anyone could have gone about a task such as confronted Mr. Comstock without having some sort of inner conviction concerning his own discriminating power. Surely he would not have inflicted suffering on others as the result of some winged process of imagination.

So we must not blame Mr. Comstock. Rather is he the victim of those who have fatuously blinked at their own servitude and permitted him to go about his task for so long a period.

Time was when the safe-guarding of the home and its morals was not so important a feature of life as it is at present, or rather people were content to silently grope around in a small circumference. But now that the literature of America is reaching out, now that we are trying to raise our standards of literary freedom and sincere pursuit of the intelligent and the true up to the standards of small countries, such as Norway and Sweden, we must accept the passing of Mr. Comstock as simply the flowering of an evolutionary process, or as the callous excrescence of a healing wound that must needs be snipped off. His work was sincere perhaps, but that does not alter the fact that he was vainly groping in diverticulæ wherein he had no business to grope.

If an author feels himself justified in spending a year or two in trying to present life truthfully, it surely is not within the province of one man to suppress his power of expression and his work, to convert the author into a tea-side platitudinizer, and to terrorize the publishers so that through self-defense they must make war upon every manifestation of honest artistic striving.

For forty years Mr. Comstock has had practically the power of limiting the reading matter of the American pub-

lic to his own standard of literary appreciation. That is a long time to have the power of annoying honest publishers and authors, especially when they have no redress under the present law. Aiming ostensibly at what was to him moral degradation and the ause of censorial metabolism, he has been permitted to crush under his falsely emblazoned shield what was to other people truth and beauty.

Surely it is to be hoped that those honest singers who have had the words choked in their throats, the truth stifled in their hearts, and the bread taken from their mouths, that Mr. Comstock might make a record, will now have as their judge not one man, but all the people who care to read their works for some unenslaved purpose of their own.

At least it is good to see that within the past year there has come about a direct change in public sentiment. People want to be their own moral purveyors, since they realize they must suffer for the sins wrought out of their own iniquities. They alone must stand in the shadow of their own calumny. Only recently have people begun to understand that if the shadowy recesses of an alleyway need be pointed out, it is better to illuminate the alley than to board up each end. They have learned that young men and young women climb fences, and that the higher the fence the higher mounts curiosity.

It is not such a far cry to the days when Zola was taboo to the young person, when the reading of Maupassant or d'Annunzio had to be done by young ladies behind locked doors or not at all, when "Madame Bovary," or Tolstoy's "Resurrection," or "Hedda Gabbler," or Zola's "Fecondité," or "Jude the Obscure," were furtively read by young people with a spark of wickedness inflaming their senses because these books were forbidden. And now the time has come when these books are read only by those who want to read them, who do not feel they thereby gain a diploma into the red ranks of wickedness. They no longer torture themselves by going through literature in the manner of the tourist, who stood in the galleries of the Louvre and checked off (from a catalogue) the paintings he had to see. And this state of affairs came about only after the censorship was taken off these books.

America, the former home of the literary bourgeois, the mushy consumer of flappedoodle nonsense and suggestive buncombe, is at last getting beyond her timidity and asserting herself for the privileged truth.

It is not progressive, it is not scientific, it is not fair, to limit the growth of art by having an appointee experience the joy or pain brought on by any particular piece of work. Nor is it right that our young men and women be mentally widowed through some one man's hobby, and their ambitions made to lie fallow because of one man's idiosyncrasies.

We move away from a picture that brings nothing to the