Fib took off from them hills right then, and left that little gal blind and carrin' an unborn chile'.

Since my misses hails from Tennessee I felt like I outa talk with the Young Rebel. I felt sorta sorry fer 'im, I guess, but he wouldn't talk to me or anyone fer that matter before the trail. Course he talked to Squire Davis and the Marshall.

The day of the hearin' the whole town crowded in the grocery and the puny Rebel told his story. Then he fished a marriage license from his pocket and the jury looked it over. It was passed around the crowd and sure enough it had old Fib's signature scribbled on it.

There wasn't much else to do but release the stranger and nobody wanted any action against 'im. I guess everyone felt kinda' sorry for the young stranger's ma'. A hat was passed and enough money was collected to see the feller home. He never did tell anyone except the Squire and the Marshall how he happened to know that Fib was livin' here in Matthews, Indiana.

Whoa! Back up girl—there now, you're good as new again. That'll be two-bits mister.

Variations On A Theme By Candide

FRANK SLUPESKY

“The United States, best of all possible countries,” is the conviction of most non-thinking, yet sincere Americans. Was our government not formed by people who rebelled against the despotism of Europe? Was our Constitution not formed to give equality and self-government to the citizens of America? Did we not fight a civil war to insure equality? Have we not always been a humane nation? Were we not too generous in donating millions to the Japanese earthquake relief, just to turn around and have them “stab us in the back” at Pearl Harbor? Have we not more radios, telephones, automobiles, washing machines, lawn mowers and phonographs than all the rest of the world? Is our standard of living not higher than that of any other country?

But, upon reflection, is the United States the best of all possible countries? Is it not possible that, like Dr. Pangloss, we are merely suffering from many illusions? Patriotism, the cause of our illusions, is an admirable quality only when it does not blind reason.

I first suspected the fallibility of the United States because of a high school history teacher. Of course in grammar school the history texts are more devoted to the eloquent speeches of Nathan Hale and Patrick Henry than to an objective delineation of history, and the high school texts as a rule are equally biased. But, fortunately, this teacher thought we had been exposed to enough illusions. For the first time I learned how the United States rudely and unjustly acquired California from Mexico, how we shamelessly failed to fulfill our agreements with France after the Revolution and how we inspired the Panamanians to revolt from Columbia just so we could build the Canal. And now we apply some very choice adjectives to the Panamanians for not renewing the lease on the islands which we have been using as air bases to protect the Panama Canal. Is there no
Our most monstrous illusion is the complacent attitude we have toward the use of the atomic bomb against Japan. Here the great mesmerizer was Henry Stimson; he wrote articles in nationally-consumed magazines, “justifying” our action. He said that if the bomb were not used, the Japanese would have fanatically defended their home islands. I, on the contrary, could not visualize the Japanese even feebly defending their land in the late summer of 1945 with the two most powerful countries of the world closing in on her. It seems elementary that supplies and food are necessary to resist an enemy; Japan had neither. During all the time spent in Japan, I did not see one war plant that had not been destroyed by our bombers.

What will the people of the future think of the Americans for the wholesale killing of 80,000 Hiroshimans all in one morning? That not being enough, our military leaders decided to have a little more fun with the Japanese, so they singled out Nagasaki as the site of the next massacre. Certainly, the Romans and the “barbarous” Macedonians were not as adept at civil destruction as we. The Romans only burned Carthage and Corinth and enslaved their inhabitants. We burned Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and killed and maimed their inhabitants. Alexander, acknowledging Greek culture, left the home of Pindar untouched when he burned Thebes. Were we so considerate?

Foreboding, some Americans are beginning to wonder what an atomic bomb explosion is like, for unless something unforeseen occurs only a miracle can save us from an even greater slaughter than that we rained on the Japanese. What a dramatic climax!

And what about the illusion of our superiority in education? True, we have spent more time giving more people an education than any other country; but, I ask, what are these educated people doing? Why do they not come out of their hibernation? Why have we never produced a great physicist, chemist, painter, writer or composer? We have produced some skillful technologists who have applied scientific laws to practical purposes, but why can we not produce scientists who can discover the scientific laws as did Galileo, Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, Boyle, Lavoisier?

Most of us call ourselves Christians and Americans, but do we believe in the Christian code of ethics and the Declaration of Independence? Christians are supposed to believe that in God’s eyes all men are equal. We Americans are told by our Declaration of Independence it is self-evident that we are created equal. Why then must we be so hypocritical? We can not be true Christians and Americans if we believe in racial inequality. We must make a choice; either we accept Americanism and Christianity or we accept racial inequality—we can not accept both. Were our own legislators not perverting our American ideals when they passed the Oriental Exclusion Act? Are our people today not repudiating Christianity and Americanism when they refuse to accept the Civil Rights Program?

What then is the aim of such an iconoclastic paper? I do not mean that our country is among the most degenerate; quite to the contrary, I think it is among the best in existence. But it is still quite a distance from that ideal, the best of all possible countries. We must in the future try to approach more closely that ideal in order that we shall be above reproach—in order that Viachislav Molotov will not be able to point, as he recently did during a United Nations meeting, to the racial strife in the United States as requiring correction by an international agency.