with ladies wanting to know in which direction to rush. Perhaps the way to achieve One World would be first to achieve One Coat, and put all ladies in it snugly.

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INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE: Though telegrams of congratulation addressed to people in this country are still forbidden, you can cable any damn whim you please to Paris.

In the Canal Zone, there's a photographer patronized by service men who carries his retouching service to the point of putting a beard or mustache on any client who requests it.

The Euclid Underwriting Corporation, of Brooklyn, manufactures Dolly Dimple Home-Maid Fudge.

Everything Under Control

MIDWAY between the Harvard Yard and the Radcliffe dormitories, not far from Longfellow's home, the site of the Washington Elm, and other landmarks, is the Commander Hotel, itself something of a landmark. The other day a guest, quietly walking through the lobby, halted in astonishment before a bulletin board which bore this notice: "Wild Wedding Reception —Martha Washington Room." Before the guest's eyebrows were any higher than half-mast, an assistant manager stood at his side, discreetly murmuring, "Some people named Wild, you know."

The Library at War

ONE public institution that converted to the war effort with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of fuss is the Public Library, but it's only just recently that the staff has felt free to talk about what has been going on for the past three years. On the surface, things have been pretty much as usual; a little quieter, if anything, because the average civilian hasn't the leisure for sitting in a library. In the Science Room, the man who hopes to create synthetic rubber from an amalgam of molasses and chewing gum has been patiently doing research. In the section devoted to Jewish lore, the theory that the English are one of the lost tribes of Israel has been booming, supported by the discovery of certain significant similarities between the proportions of the Pyramids and those of early English playing cards. Such theorists are in a minority, however. Ninety per cent of the Library's dealings of late have been with the armed forces and various government agencies. For instance, there is a collection of telephone books from all over the world which has been useful to Army Intelligence. In combination with a detailed map, a telephone book will help an artillery commander locate military objectives with satisfactory exactness. That's the kind of thing that has been going on at the corner of Fifth and Forty-second.

Inevitably, the Library staff has had advance hints of the big strategic moves. During 1942, the Picture Section had so many requests from official sources for stuff about Algiers and Morocco that the librarians finally put the whole geographic file into one large room and permitted only Army and Navy officers to use it. Otherwise the public would have got wise to the intense military interest in North Africa through the absence of material on that region. The invasion of Normandy surprised the staff a little, however; insofar as they had allowed themselves to make guesses, they had, on the basis of the concentration of official research, been guessing on a thrust up through Greece. Every time we knock off another island in the Pacific, the Navy men in charge of restoring the government there send some officer around to the Library to find out just what the hell the government was in the first place. The armed services' demand for miscellaneous dope is heavy, and the Library people supply it without asking any questions: the color of a flea's eye, of an African wolf, of General MacArthur's hair; information on how the ancient Roman soldiers were protected against flame throwers; fabric designs likely to be popular among the natives of North Africa.

There are something like four million items in the Picture Section, and at one time or another almost all of them have been borrowed in behalf of the war effort. Makers of training films want pictures of various types of weapons, of cockroaches and other vermin, of edible and inedible fish, and of thousands of other things dealt with in training films. Artists attached to the Army are always coming back from Germany, say, and asking for scenes of Germany on which to base their paintings. The pin-up craze has apparently extended to officers; at least, the Library reports that corporals come in now and then pursuing orders to get a picture of Lana Turner (the Library has almost as many poses of Lana as it has of the common cockroach). The propagandists demand pictures of Garibaldi, or the Declaration of Independence in German. A batch of noncoms from the Aberdeen Proving Ground once appeared in search of a picture symbolizing democracy; they finally selected one of two babies fighting. The Army suddenly has to have, and gets, a picture of the battle of Thermopylae. And so it goes. The most pathetic request the Library has had was for a view of San Antonio. It came from a soldier stationed there who wanted to know what the place looked like before it was full of soldiers.

Deterioration

DURING a particularly hazardous lunch hour, a bus girl in an Automat was heard to say to a teammate, "I'm gettin' outta this job the end of the week. They're gettin' worse and worse." "*Who*'s gettin' worse and worse?" her friend asked. "Them," the first girl said. "The public."

Phonographic Mind

THE blindfold chess champion of the world, as some sporting elements among our readers may know, is a cheerful, forty-one-year-old Belgian professional named George Koltanowski, who is drudging away for the duration as a diamond cutter in a loft on West Thirty-sixth Street. The other day, having been informed by a chess enthusiast that Mr. Koltanowski is scheduled to take on six fledglings simultaneously in a blindfold match this week at the Julien Levy Gallery, we looked him up and had a talk with him. In his time, Mr. Koltanowski has played as many as thirty-four people

"I wrote home about this but they wouldn't believe me."

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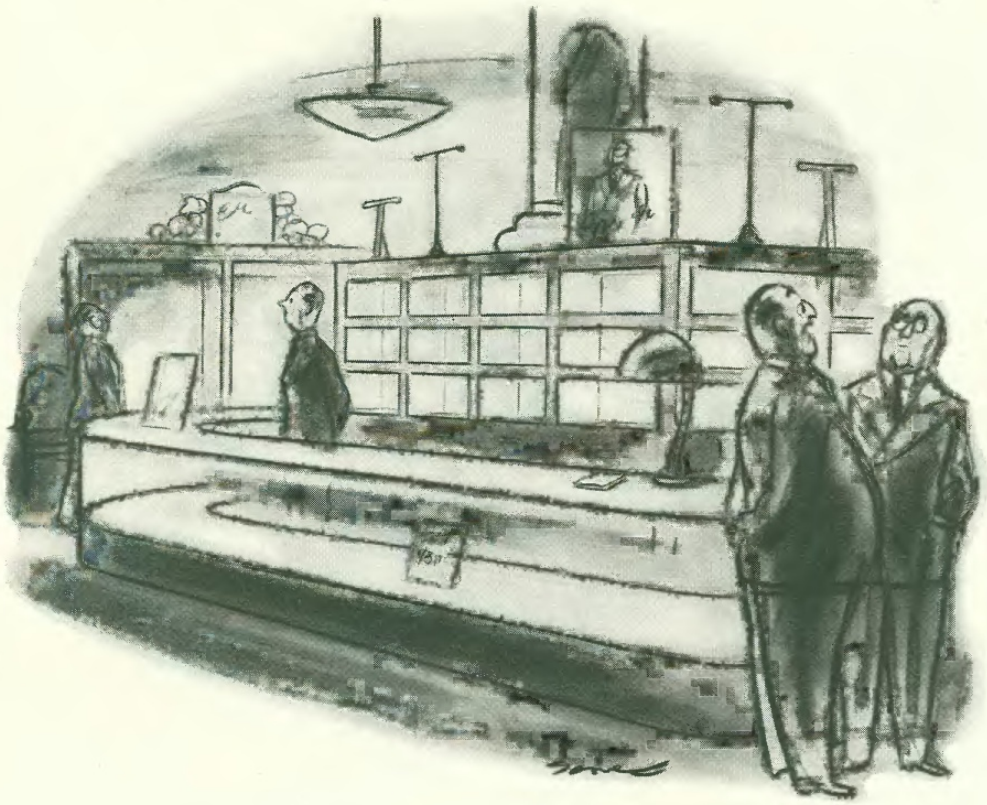
simultaneously, so we were not surprised to find him reasonably confident of victory. He is looking forward to the match, though, because he has not had many opportunities to keep his hand in since the war disrupted the international chess circuit and because his opponents in this case, while no great shakes as chess players, are a fairly distinguished lot—Max Ernst, Dr. Gregory Zilboorg, Alfred Barr, Jr., Frederick Kiesler, Dorothea Tanning, and Mr. Levy.

For a professional, Mr. K. picked up the habit rather late in life. He was fourteen when his father, an Antwerp diamond broker and chess amateur, finally got around to teaching him the moves. Serious players, it seems, believe that seven is the right age to begin. Despite the handicap of maturity, Mr. K. showed considerable promise from the start. Within a couple of weeks he was beating his father with ease. "Then I began to play with one of my father's chess-club friends," he said. "He spotted me a queen the first time and beat me. Ten days later I was able to give him a queen and beat him. It is hard to explain a thing like that. Also, it is embarrassing." The embarrassing triumphs continued. The lad became the Antwerp champion at sixteen, runner-up for the Belgian championship at eighteen, and, two years later, the national champion. "It was an advantage," he said. "It made my term of military service most pleasant. I peeled potatoes in the mornings and the rest of the time I played chess with the captain." Military life tightened up his game; sometimes it required all of his ingenuity and imagination to avoid defeating the captain too quickly. Eventually, ordinary chess began to pall on him, so he turned for excitement to blindfold chess and multiple opponents, the last resort of sated addicts. Blindfold chess, Mr. K. told us, requires merely that the player have what is called "total recall." "One needs no brains to play it, just a memory," he says. In such a match the master usually is not only blindfolded but sits with his back to the boards on which he plays his opponents. The moves which he decides on are relayed by a referee to at-



"Well, one thing—we haven't got much of an inventory problem this year."

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tendants, who move the pieces. The moves made by the master's opponents are, in turn, called out to the master by the referee. "The blindfold is merely a convention," Mr. K. said. "I could just as easily sit in another room, or, for that matter, at a telephone at home." For a while he tried to combine diamond cutting, a trade his father had insisted that he learn, with chess teaching, exhibitions, and professional matches. He abandoned diamonds as a career in 1931, after a big tournament in Antwerp in which, blindfold, he played thirty opponents simultaneously. His score was twenty wins and ten draws. His fee, which was paid by an organization of chess enthusiasts, was encouraging. He passed the next few years pleasantly and profitably, playing in tournaments in Europe and Latin America. "But," he told us, "I was not yet the champion. Alekhine was the champion. He had played thirty-two simultaneous matches, won nineteen, drawn nine." Mr. Koltanowski's chance came in 1937, when he was offered a thousand pounds to play thirty-four picked English, Scotch, and Irish amateurs in Edinburgh. He accepted, then went to Ireland for six months and trained vigorously by eating heartily and sleeping long hours. He won twenty-four of the games and tied the others. The time was thirteen and a half hours.

We asked Mr. Koltanowski about his methods of keeping track of his and his opponents' moves. "The less I think during a match," he said, "the better my play is. All the moves are in my mind from the beginning of the match. My mind is a gramophone record. When I want to know what moves have been made, I start the record in my mind. Then I listen."

Sympathetic

DURING one of the coldest days of last week, a truck pulled up at Stern's unloading platform and the driver hauled out a mannequin, more naked than anybody since Eve, and plunked her down on the platform in front of a fellow who was waiting to help him unload. "Here! Take her inside before I freeze to death watchin' her," he muttered.

Empty Wine Glass

WE paid a visit to the Vanderbilt mansion during Christmas week, just three months after the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and a few days before the moving men. Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, hopelessly outflanked by De Pinna's, is retiring to a previously prepared position in the Eighties, and the Astor Estate, the new owner of the house, has announced that it will be torn down and an office building put up in its place. The butler who answered our ring looked harried. He was drying his hands on his apron; it was before noon, when butlers wear aprons. He confided to us later that running a fifty-two-room house with a staff of twelve is no cinch. There are a hundred and some bells, any one of which, we gathered, might be expected to ring at any time.

The butler passed us along to Mrs. Vanderbilt's secretary and went back to his chore, which was putting champagne into coolers. He was working in the pantry off the grand dining room, which seats fifty people and was used for the last time when the Duke and Duchess were there. Luncheon was laid in the breakfast room, which hasn't been used for breakfasts for decades. It has *boiseries* carved in France and has been said by thoughtful decorators to be the most beautiful room in this country. The *boiseries*, by the way, date back only to 1916, two years after Cornelius Vanderbilt III inherited the place from his father, William H. Vanderbilt, who built it. Cornelius spent something over half a million simplifying the architecture and furnishings; pretty cheap, considering that three million dollars' worth of 1880 artistic élan had originally been lavished on it. It is too bad, though, that William H. Vanderbilt's dressing room was not preserved. It had a vaulted ceiling, walls of opalescent blue, gold, and silver tiling, sliding doors of plate