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FIRST THINGS FIRST

SOMEWHERE in the transition between the psychological epochs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, thoughtful Americans began to lose their taste for certain of the expansive enthusiasms of the Founding Fathers. There is, it seems, a tremendous difference between the human qualities and objectives which are needed in order to build a civilization, and those required to keep it livable after it has been built.

The men of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were planning the construction of a great, new, social order, and their expressed sentiments were appropriate to this task. Chevalier de Chastellux, who fought in the war for American Independence, declared in his book, *On Public Felicity*, that happiness, prosperity and liberty would be found where there were "flourishing agriculture, large populations, and the growth of trade and industry." At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the idea of endless human Progress was still a relatively young and vigorous doctrine. And progress, for energetic men with an unused continent lying before them, meant ploughing, building, bridging—enriching themselves and, almost inevitably, everyone else. It was not a niggling, merely acquisitive idea, but a challenge to great adventure. The age belonged to men possessing the spirit of conquest, of exploration and ingenious invention. Thomas Jefferson, besides his other attainments, designed an improved plough which won a prize in France, and developed other devices for agricultural use (none of which he patented). Thomas Paine invented an iron bridge, Benjamin FrankIin, the cast-iron stove. In the same year that Jefferson wrote the famous passage in the Declaration of Independence asserting the human right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations,* describing the political economy he thought most likely to secure all three.

A hundred and fifty years ago, anyone who invented a new machine or a technical process which increased the supply of needed commodities was a man who served his fellows well. Today, such a man may, without realizing it, menace the jobs of thousands of people whose work will be taken over by his machine. In any event, he isn't a hero any more. He has a place among the technologists, but he makes no special mark upon the social scene. The same is true of the explorer. The pioneers who follow the man animated by the spirit of discovery are no longer *human* pioneers, but technicians. They may be theoretical physicists who at once move the new discovery into their laboratory to find out how to put it to work for industry and the State. Or they may be organic chemists who make ready to exploit it for some enormous food processing corporation.

The gears of the system are everywhere, ready to mesh on anything new. If a plant biologist develops a new species of seed, it serves the interest of highly organized agricultural industry. Everything, sooner or later, is reduced to dollar value; actually, we seem to have nothing but the dollar to measure things by. Discoverers and inventors may have their own private thrills of origination, but whether they care or not, and whether they notice it or not, the system prevents them from sharing their thrills. The men who will use the discovery have it sold to them because it will reduce their costs or make possible a price increase for their products. By the time the "consumer" meets the final result of the original discovery, all sense of participation in a new gift of nature, or in human ingenuity, is gone. There may be a momentary wonderment at the cleverness of "science"—some "what-will-they-do-next" sort of exclamation—but little more.

Books dealing with men who work on the problems of the primary construction of civilization are like nineteenth-century novels—we read them with little more than a mechanical interest, for they are about people whose problems are very different from our own. For the primary problems of civilization-building are primary no longer; other problems have taken their place. We still have copy-book slogans for the old "primary problems," and social ethics connected with them, but they leave us cold. In the pioneer days, you helped your neighbor build his house, and if there was a fire, you ran, with everyone else, to put it out. These were the unargued obligations of decent human beings. Beyond them, however, it was pretty much every man for himself. But now you can't help your neighbor to build his house. First of all, you probably don't know how; and second, even if you do know how, and want to help him, you don't belong to the union. And you'd only be in the way at a fire. The traditional ethical obligations have not been overthrown, they have grown merely nominal, and no other obligations (except money obligations, such as higher taxes, the Community Chest, the Red Cross, the March of Dimes, Defense Bonds, Care Packages, etc., etc.) have taken their place. We still have a threadbare code of personal morality, and we retain the idea of patriotism, which is related to the social contract defining the obligations of the individual to the State, but both these attitudes neglect the region of experience where new problems are emerging—problems which are unforeseen by-products of the type of civilization we have built.

Some of these problems are material, some psychological. The material problems are usually defined in quantitative terms. We are losing, we are told, a fabulous tonnage of rich topsoil to the forces of erosion, mostly as a result of irresponsible methods of farming. Periodically, petroleum engineers issue stringent warnings about the dwindling supply of oil, and forest conservationists assert that before the century is out we shall have a serious famine of timber, unless the lumber interests can be persuaded to accept rigid controls over their operations and will agree to apply known principles of reforestation. However, it now appears that the quantitative problems are not the most serious. Today, the *quality* of the physical environment is rapidly changing for the worse. Air, soil and food, the primary necessities of life, seem to be undergoing rapid deterioration, as a result of prevailing industrial processes, with corresponding effects on the human organism.

According to Dr. Joseph C. Risser, an orthopedic surgeon of Pasadena, Calif., and president-elect of the Academy of Applied Nutrition, it is likely that the manufacturing methods used in the production of modern foods are responsible for the growing susceptibility of the population to epidemic disease. In a recent interview, Dr. Risser told the press:

> Back in 1900, there was so little "polio" that the disease scarcely was recognized. Now, however, the incidence seems to be mounting steadily. It's beginning to amount to an annual epidemic. There are reasons for suspecting that sterile and overly processed foods are helping to breed a polio-susceptible generation. (Los Angeles *Times*, Feb. 7.)

The biological history of the individual, Dr. Risser said, is written in his bones, and our bones now give evidence that recent generations "have been stuffing themselves—not feeding in the sense of supplying the body's greatest needs." The press account continues:

> In past centuries, he [Dr. Risser] said, people didn't need to worry about eating the right food if their environment was right. In short, if the environment offered natural food which instinct desired, instinct did the rest. His point is that, because man has tampered with foods, our previously unerring instinct for eating the right foods has been thwarted. The right foods aren't available, in part because soils have been depleted of the most essential elements.

Dr. Risser went so far as to propose that, for the sake of health, residents of Southern California ought to take advantage of the opportunities of their environment by starting "a small garden" and

doing "whatever else is possible to obtain at least a part of our food directly, fresh from nature." There was certainly less polio, he said, "when children drank milk direct from cows, ate black strap molasses, fertilized eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables, and the liver and other vital parts of animals." Further comments amount to a broad critique of the joint influence of science and technology on modern foods:

> Ever since Pasteur discovered germs, we have been sterilizing food by heat and other methods. We forgot that while killing the germs we also were destroying some of the most valuable essentials to health. Now we must put them back or the entire human race will suffer. The delay thus far has created gigantic problems.
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> Not only have we robbed ourselves of perfect health but we also have robbed the soil. It doesn't do much good to eat things which have sprung from soil poor in minerals. Until we put all our garbage and all organic waste back into the soil, it's likely that the carrot you eat today will be less and less likely to do you good than the one your grandfather wiped off on the grass.

It is also likely that, in an interview with the press, this conscientious specialist offered only the more obvious conclusions of his observation and research, and that the depletion of the physical environment is a general tendency that will be increasingly revealed by medical men as time goes on.

Another phase of the attack by modern civilization on the natural environment is discussed in *Science* for Jan. 20, by Dr. Clarence A. Mills of the College of Medicine, University of Cincinnati. His subject is the poisoned atmosphere which, on Oct. 30, 1948, caused the death of twenty persons living in Donora, Pennsylvania—"America's first mass killing from industrial air pollution." The occasion for Dr. Mills' letter to *Science* is a rather severe criticism of the preliminary report of the Donora disaster issued by the U. S. Public Health Service, in which he finds a serious omission. The government investigators participating in "the Public Health Service's first foray into the field of community air pollution," he says,

> spent months analyzing the valley air for poisons, but failed to calculate the concentrations probably present during the killing smog a year ago, when an inversion blanket clamped a lid down over the valley's unfortunate people. Had they made such calculation, they would have found that even one day's accumulation of the very irritating red oxides of nitrogen from the acid plant stacks would have caused concentrations almost as high as had been set as the maximum allowable for safety of factory workers exposed only for an 8-hour work day. At the end of 4 days of last year's blanketing smog, concentrations reached were probably more than four times higher than the 10 milligrams per cubic meter of air listed as the upper limit of safety! And the Donora people breathed the poisoned air not 8 hours a day but for 4 whole days. *More than 4 tons* of this poison gas were poured out into the valley air every day during the April test period, even though the brownish-red plumes from the acid plant stacks were then very much less dense than those commonly seen up to the time of the October tragedy.

Dr. Mills notes that a similar disaster occurred in Belgium in 1930, taking the lives of 60 persons and making many thousands ill—"under conditions almost identical with those at Donora"—yet almost two decades later the outmoded smelter at Donora was still operating as it and its Belgian counterpart were doing in 1930. His concluding observation is this:

> Let us hope that the Donora disaster will awaken people everywhere to the dangers they face from pollution of the air they must breathe to live. These 20 suffered only briefly, but many of the six thousand made ill that night will face continuing difficulties in breathing for the remainder of their lives. Herein lies the greatest health danger from polluted air—continuing damage to the respiratory system through years of nonkilling exposure.
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> Millions of Americans and most medical scientists had been aware of this important public health hazard for several years before the Donora episode spotlighted the community dangers of industrial air pollution. But the U. S. Public Health Service focused its interest on the health of workers *within* the plants. Only after the Donora disaster was it drawn into the much more important aspect of the problem—the relation of industrial air pollution to *community* health.

A further sidelight on the effects of air pollution lies in the fact that practically no plant life can survive within a mile radius of the Donora smelter, and that the eroded and devastated countryside looks like a battlefield sterilized by war. (A general article on the Donora tragedy was contributed by Dr. Mills to *Hygeia* for October, 1949.)

The psychological problems of modern civilization are described for us by the psychiatrists and the sociologists. Generally, the psychotherapists trace the complex neuroticisms of the time to types of religious anxiety, known to induce self-deprecation and abnormal "guiltiness," while the social scientists concern themselves with the patterns of life created by modern industrialism. It seems likely that, if the men engaged in this research could be genuinely effective in meeting such problems—as effective, say, as were the "pioneers" of one and two centuries ago in laying the foundations for the physical and economic exploitation of the United States—these scientists would soon take the place of the Founding Fathers as national heroes. As it is, they are able only to diagnose, to criticize, and to view with alarm. For while a small group or even a single man could explore and make accessible a new portion of the continent, or bring a new industry into being, scientists who examine the established patterns of social and economic life can do almost nothing, *as* scientists, to change them—they can only describe what seem to be their effects.

Descriptions, however, are important for setting the new primary problems of civilization, even if, thus far, they suggest little in the way of practical reform. Prof. Gordon Rattray Taylor, writing in the English *Sociological Review* (1948), discusses the psychological traits characteristic of the people of the "mass society" of the present. A mass society, in contrast to what Prof. Taylor calls an "organic society," is a society without inner or *psychic* integration. It has technical or mechanical structure, but human relationships are formless and anarchic. There is the individual, and there is the mass, represented by the State, but little that is coherent or definable between these two extremes. The sense of human community is lacking. Prof. Taylor writes:

> As we all know, people are pitchforked together in towns which are almost devoid of group structure. People move from place to place and from job to job. . . . As the result of the general anonymity of society, it is rather easy to commit crime of any kind, without "social" consequences, and very easy to commit those crimes which are not specifically condemned by the law. Naturally enough, people are very insecure, very exhausted, very frustrated. . . . In the mass society we have no groups, simply a large number of individuals and a central power the state. We have, of course, plenty of groups formed for limited purposes, but we have very few groups which provide total life-situations for their members.
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> This conception of isolated individuals owing no allegiance, except to the state, corresponds pretty closely with the picture drawn by the 19th century economists. And it is an interesting point that this certainly did not describe life as it existed when Ricardo and Adam Smith were writing. Another feature of the mass society is the extent to which it has delegated primary life-functions—such as food-production and the administration of law—to specialists.
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> It is because we have created this approximation to a mass society that we find a steady growth of central control. It is because the natural sanctions of the group have broken down that we have to have bureaucratic mores and legal sanctions. (Reprinted in *Community Service News*, Jan.-Feb., 1950.)

Prof. Taylor's approach implies that the current struggle between the "East" and the "West" may be something of a false alarm—that the real issue is between understanding the modern industrial society we have created, and refusing to understand it. Bureaucracy and social controls may be the penalty that every mass society—whether capitalist or communist—will have to pay for ignoring the essential characteristics of modern industrialism. "The Conservatives," says Prof. Taylor, speaking of England's socialist venture, "are simply travelling the same road as the Socialists, but a mile or two

behind."

He has something further to say on the psychological attitudes generated in a mass society:

> A point I should like to make here is that huge central agencies—hospitals, labour exchanges, pension offices and so on—inevitably treat the individual as a cipher. In some cases they make attempts to disguise this, but since they do not know him as an individual they cannot really treat him as one. Those who work among such surroundings all agree that being treated like a cipher, or like a bit of machinery, is a continual source of complaint. . . . social agencies are interested in *what you* are but people are interested in *who you* are. The social worker says to the mother of a poverty-stricken family, "Your Johnny must be taken away and properly looked after: he's starved and lousy." (That's *what* he is.) She replies: "But he's my Johnny" (i.e., she replies by stating *who* he is).
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> The task, then, is to restore the group structure of society and with it the personal contact between those whose decisions affect one another.

These, then, are some reasons why epic tales of civilization-building thrill only audiences of children and technologists. The child and small boy may enjoy them because a sense of the social disaster which has overtaken modern civilization would be precocious knowledge for the very young; the technologists, because they do not think in human, but only in mechanical, terms. The old primary problems of civilization, of external construction, have become secondary; and the secondary problems, those relating to maintaining healthy, happy lives within the system we have created, have become primary. Perhaps the latter were always primary, and our great mistake has been in not realizing it. At any rate, there is no longer any question as to which comes first.

Letter from **FRANCE**

A COLLEGE TOWN.—The colonial situation continues to place the government in a difficult position. So many people are tired and disgusted with the lengthy conflict in Indo-China. But the government feels obligated to support the interests of a small French minority, and at the same time prevent the coming to power of the communist-supported movement for complete independence, led by Ho Chih Minh. So it has been trying to arrange with the ex-emperor, Bao Dai, to set up a puppet republic. Discussion of the "Bao Dai Agreements" in the National Assembly earlier this year provoked one of the stormiest sessions in recent times. Shouts, name-calling and desk-banging from the Communist left elicited equally vociferous replies from the conservative right. The minority of socialists were left in the role of spectators. The latter had proposed a motion opening the way for a genuine popular choice of government in Viet-Nam, and for an immediate cessation of hostilities, but the motion was defeated (483-109). Neither side would object to peace, but neither seemed to have the confidence that a free election would be satisfactory. The Indo-Chinese people, apparently, have become pawns in the gigantic struggle for the balance of power, between the "Eastern" world and the "Western" world.

Indo-China, battleground between "communists" and "anti-communists," is a fertile field for the operations of black- and gray-marketeers. In a world divided by trade barriers, it is inevitable that those who cannot "legally" find markets and sources of supply are tempted to use "illegal" methods. A blockade in wartime may help determine the outcome of the war, and may help avoid destruction, but in peacetime serves merely to hamper civilian populations and normal trade development, at the same time encouraging the unscrupulous. France—like other countries of western Europe—feels greatly disadvantaged by the power of the dollar. On one hand, France regards the efforts of the United States toward economic cooperation without any illusions about the complete disinterestedness of the Americans. (Of course, there is a great deal of recognition of the benefits accruing from American aid during the past years.) On the other hand, there are the labyrinthine ways of undercover trading between the "Western" and "Eastern" worlds, through such gateways as Switzerland, Scandinavia, and Germany—processes through which certain people reap huge profits.

Meanwhile, the problem of the cost of living continues. Despite the great strides in post-war production, wages still lag behind needs. Though food-rationing is no more, food-prices are at present climbing towards American levels. Yet eighty per cent of French wage-earners receive less than 20,000 francs ($57) monthly. Strikes have lost considerable potency through their frequence. Lacking other methods of protest, workers have been varying the techniques a bit—as, for example, the recent wave of "surprise" strikes on Parisian transport lines. Certain bus and subway lines stop running for a few hours at a time. But in domestic as well as in international matters, we have difficulty progressing beyond "provisional" solutions to the many problems.

FRENCH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
OUR OWN TIME MACHINE

WE have for review a book called *The Apology*, by one Mr. Plato, which we would probably have set aside for briefer mention along with other volumes, save for its ingenious, if grossly misleading, comparison of contemporary jurisprudence with the unenlightened practices of some 2350 years ago—a time toward the end of the epoch known to antiquarians as the Era of Destructive Military Politicalism. The subject of Mr. Plato's book, a man named Socrates, seems—until recently—to have been an actual member of the Athenian community, a sort of vagabond orator and street-corner heckler, whose subversive activities were finally disclosed beyond doubt. With their accustomed graciousness, the Five Hundred, after patiently hearing this Socrates plead his cause, allowed the offender to take his own life. He had, it seems, been undermining the religious convictions of our youth, and while some milder charge might have been formulated, on the ground that the erratic man was ignorant of his crime, the manner of his public "defense" was such as to leave no doubt of his intention to shake all reliance on traditional authority and established religious opinion. Quite apparently, it was for this malignant purpose that he was made to drink the hemlock, as one incurably attached to socio-religious delusions.

Mr. Plato, however, has sought to create sympathy for the character of Socrates—doubtless a much improved one, in this book—by making his trial seem parallel to the vindictive persecutions of certain harmless individuals who resisted the military-political delusions of two millenniums ago. Like Socrates, these men were in the habit of declaring that it was the social community which was on trial, and not they. In Greece, to our shame, a number of such men were executed for refusing military service, and in France, England, and the United States, similar "offenders" were given prison terms of varying length. It was the period, we shall recall, if we know our history, when the popular practice of religion was in hypocritical contrast to the plain teachings of the "Messiah," Jesus, then given nominal "worship" throughout the West, and it remained for these few courageous individuals to challenge the prevailing political mania. A minor irony lies in the fact that the great Indian reformer of the time, Gandhi, who was so much praised by all the world immediately following his death, maintained the same convictions as these more obscure opponents of the political delusion. But neither the conscientious objectors nor Gandhi attacked religion—rather, it was the spurious rival of religion, the politics of the Power State, which they resisted and criticized, and by which they were made to suffer.

It is this distinction which Mr. Plato hides in appealing to our sympathies on behalf of his talkative hero, Socrates. Of course, Plato is careful not to belabor the parallel. He does not annotate his argument with historical references, but there can be little doubt that he hoped his readers would make the proper substitutions, and see, when he writes "Socrates," the name of Larry Gara (subject of a recent historical monograph), or even Gandhi himself.

But with all Plato's skill, the effort fails. The facts of the crime of Socrates are evident, and plausible literary art cannot conceal them. We must remember that in the barbarous society of North America of 2300-2400 years ago, there was a legal separation between Religion and the State, with the consequence that acts on behalf of religious conviction could be and frequently were punished in the name of political justice. When, then, Mr. Plato attempts to compare Socrates with those ancient martyrs, he achieves only an air of strained artificiality and special pleading. We know, today, as the authorities of State in Gara's time did not, that religion is the bulwark of the community, and that whoever attacks religion menaces the basic well-being of society. Mr. Plato cannot be ignorant of this disastrous flaw in his reasoning, for the recently published study of

the Gara case makes plain the benighted view taken by the courts before which Gara was tried.

Gara, it will be recalled, was a young man who accepted the teaching of Christ that it is wrong to kill in war, and, along with several thousand young men of similar persuasion, he was kept in prison during one of the more destructive sequences of the struggle which, over a century or two, destroyed nearly every vestige of the "political" civilization of the European continent, and vastly weakened the moral resources and culture of North America. Then, after that particular strife was over—during a short interim period—he dared to encourage a youth to obey his religious feelings in the matter of peacetime military service. Gara was promptly convicted of an offense against the political community and again sentenced to prison. In one of the trials of Gara—occasions when judicial spokesmen often summed up the contentions of the political mania—it was asserted by the court that Gara was guilty of a crime against the State because of the existence of an alleged "cold war" (scholars have not yet fully determined the meaning of this expression), and because "freedom of religion" must submit to the limitations which the political State decides are necessary to impose.

The prosecution of Socrates, even on the showing of Mr. Plato, was on quite different grounds. Socrates spoke slyly to our young men, instilling doubts about their religion. In effect, he challenged the validity of our organic religious society, attempting to introduce mystery where all has been plain and orderly for centuries. Plato, moreover, wishes us to believe that Socrates was not condemned for the crimes alleged in the indictment brought before the Five Hundred, but only because of a vague if widespread prejudice against him. But the careful reader will note that nowhere in his plea does Socrates directly deny his heresies; instead, he circles carefully around the charge, employing rhetorical tricks to evade the issue. There may, however, be substance in the suggestion that the Five Hundred imposed the penalty of death upon Socrates in order to vindicate the popular indignation against this impudent man who habitually caught at the tunics of established citizens to pester them with questions about "virtue." They having it, as the natural endowment of a good, religious Athenian, and he knowing nothing of virtue except to deny that it could be gained by established and time-honored procedures—it was inevitable that his wordy skill should embarrass our staunch and stable citizens into a righteous annoyance, which finally grew into the deep suspicion leading to the trial of Socrates. The people, after all, do know what they are about, and the Five Hundred are not an irresponsible "mob." The judges of Socrates stand for the security and well-being of the Athenian community. It is common knowledge that the stability of society depends upon the maintenance of religious beliefs at a level far above criticism or irreverent inquiry. As an Athenian aristocrat with all the advantages of a higher education, Mr. Plato should need no instruction in this principle.

It is our verdict that the Diomed monograph on the Gara case will live and take its place with the great historical studies of human progress—a testament to the inalienable religious sense in all human beings—while the writings of Mr. Plato, although briefly honored in the coteries and by the short-haired faddists of the agora, will soon be forgotten. One wishes that the perceptiveness of our Athenian culture were sufficient to make commentary of this sort unnecessary. Let us hope that our remarks will serve an actual need among only the immature few.

COMMENTARY
CONVERGING THEMES

IT will probably occur to some readers, as it occurred to us, that there is a distinct convergence of ideas in the problems described in this week's lead article and the theme that has characterized "Children . . . and Ourselves" for several weeks past.

Twenty or thirty years ago observant educators began to notice the unreality which had become increasingly typical of formal education. As a result, the Progressive movement gained wide and enthusiastic support among teachers. The key to the vitality of Progressive education lies in its demand that children be interested in and want to do the things that the school offers as practical vehicles of the learning process, and an important part of gaining the interest of the children has been the selection of "real-life" situations as the background for teaching.

Progressive education, however, depended upon the prevailing institutions of our society for its real-life situations—and this, in time, produced another sort of artificiality in education, for the mature processes of technology can hardly be imitated in the schoolroom. It is even questionable that these processes *ought* to be imitated, for any reason.

Instead, our greatest need seems to be to raise up a generation of intensely self-reliant and insistently questioning individuals—people who will regard the fractionation of human individuality by the industrial system as literally intolerable, and who will have the personal resourcefulness to build another kind of human existence. "Children . . . and Ourselves" has been concentrating on the practical requirements of education for this end.

It goes without saying that young people who grow up under such influences will not turn out to be the smooth young men and women that we expect of conventional production lines in education. They will have rough edges and stubborn angularities of character. They may annoy us by questioning things that *we* have never thought to question. They may even make bad mistakes.

But then, we never questioned much of anything we were asked to believe, and the results are before us. If, now, we decide that some things ought to be changed, we shall first need to develop the kind of people who have both the daring and the capacity to institute changes, and make ourselves willing and able to swallow the discomforts and embarrassments that changes will undoubtedly bring.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

> Your suggestion of an interest-project for children and parents in relation to the study and preparation of food doubtless has merit, but it occurs to me that this project is mostly for a family that is comfortably well off, with the refrigerator full, mechanical juicers and an atmosphere of plenty. How about the family whose material resources are meager—where mother has to cook perhaps great quantities of macaroni or potatoes, buy the cheapest kind of food, where oranges are scarcely ever seen and there isn't enough of anything for children to "experiment" with? In such a family, there usually aren't any "special dishes," and everyone eats what there is or goes hungry. What such "interest-project," if any, can be applied in these circumstances?

THIS questioner may be harboring a suspicion that the editor of "Children—and Ourselves" has received a certain amount of previous conditioning as a satisfactorily solvent epicure. However, we do recognize that the latest scientifically perfect dietary—especially if it essays to be fleshless—requires both money and time for buying things not available at every corner market. Let's set the discussion in the realm of possible, reasonable *improvement*, and for the present not worry about *"perfection."* Our previous column attempted to indicate the educational opportunities of food preparation in the average home. We shall therefore proceed to try to show that the average home does afford the early participation of children in food preparation.

One of the significant lessons to be learned from a study of Gandhi's Basic Education Program in India is that any region possesses, in its cheapest foodstuffs, sufficient ingredients to provide a fairly well-balanced diet—so long as they are known and used in the proper proportion. Sevagram children are extraordinarily healthy and robust, living on a dietary costing only a few cents per day, while at the same time, in "richer" sections of India, various apologists seek to explain the general frailty of Indian people by their lack of the rich foods available to Western peoples.

The same must apply to those families of the United States who have very small incomes. Potatoes, for instance, are an excellent food and provide more than one necessary vitamin in addition to the calories offered by starch—but only if the consumer knows that the skin of the potato is its most important part. Similarly, the difference in cost between soybean macaroni and spaghetti and white flour varieties is not sufficient to make a substantial difference in the kitchen budget. Many families suffer from vitamin deficiencies while living in an area where most of these deficiencies may be supplied at infinitesimal cost, via turnip tops and other inexpensive greens. And, as for oranges—admittedly expensive as well as of great vitamin value it is still possible for every family to either have a small regular quantity of oranges, or else obtain the same elements from other fruits. (Good orange-juicers, incidentally, are not necessarily expensive, and may be obtained for the price of three or four motion-picture tickets.)

These observations should not, however, be construed as a supercilious attack upon the intelligence of the people who live under difficult circumstances with small incomes. The average person's taste in food is developed by a conditioning process for which modern advertising is in large part responsible. It is easy for persons to be led to believe—and even physically *feel*—that they have not "really eaten" until they have had steak, french-fried potatoes and pie, for these are the foods that appear on billboards and in magazine advertisements. Similarly, in India, there are natives whose stomachs revolt at the normal diet of another region only a few hundred miles away, even though this latter diet may be superior in calories and of better balance. The body adjusts itself very easily to certain patterns of eating just as it does to patterns of thinking. Our stomachs as well as our minds can be senselessly dogmatic.

As to "special dishes": This does not

necessarily mean pâté de fois gras, caviar or crêpes suzettes. Any housekeeper with normal imagination can turn up palatable innovations in simple dishes, and it is often these which prove to be the most enduringly favorite foods of children. It is seldom that some specialty of the reigning chef fails to bring echoes of appreciation from all members of the family.

But we doubt that we would be talking about education via foodstuffs, if it were not for a conviction that children need to be apprised of the general inadequacy, artificiality and mistakenness inhering in the most typical patterns of conventional living. One of the first things they need to know is that modern advertising misrepresents the nature of almost anything it promotes, and a convincing demonstration that this is true is in a scientific comparison of *basic foods* with highly advertised "brand" products. If the child who lives on the products from a very limited kitchen budget can realize that he may, with discrimination, be healthier and stronger than the children of the rich people across the tracks, he will be possessed of a constructive defense against the superficial social distinctions created by ideas about money. Perhaps he can come to see that in all other departments of human living, the same rule holds true. And if he is *especially* acute in perception, he may even become aware that the greater the number of possessions and the more excessive the income of the family, the harder is it for its members to separate basically important things from the many other things which have a purely display significance.

Now, to take into account one point in our questioner's critique. Is it possible for poor people to furnish food to children for experimentation? Anything is possible, if it is considered to be sufficiently important. A covert watching of what is done by the child may avert any permanent harm to the materials used, and if anything is spoiled after adequate supervisory guidance has been furnished, and the subsequent meal consequently abbreviated to the discomfiture of the child, it is possible that errors of unnecessary carelessness will be satisfactorily eliminated on the next occasion. This, by the way, is not bad advice for all homes. When mistakes which lead to waste are simply corrected by someone's pocketbook, the child has little opportunity to recognize that waste, instead of involving only a trip to a garbage disposal unit, attacks a vital principle in human affairs. For what is wasted, be it from physical or psychological resources, can never be reclaimed again. Conservation can be regarded simply as the natural result of a respect for one's relation to any useful materials.

FRONTIERS

Reversing A Destructive Process

IN the past decade or so, the champions of the rights of the American Indians seem to have "grown up." Without minimizing the crimes committed against the Red Man, the impersonality of social science has achieved what no amount of emotional accusation could ever have accomplished—a clear understanding of the forces which worked to deprive the Indians of their land.

The simplest explanation of the fate of the Indians was years ago expressed on the floor of the United States Senate by Senator Casserly of California—most eloquent of all the opponents of the Department of the Interior Appropriations Bill for 1871. When passed, this Act provided that the United States would no longer deal with the Indians as "nations" or "tribes," with which treaties must be made. He said:

> I know what the misfortune of the tribes is. Their misfortune is not that they are red men; not that they are semi-civilized, not that they are a dwindling race, not that they are a weak race. Their misfortune is that they hold great bodies of rich lands, which have aroused the cupidity of powerful corporations and of powerful individuals . . . I greatly fear that the adoption of this provision to discontinue treaty-making is the beginning of the end in respect to Indian lands. It is the first step in a great scheme of spoliation, in which the Indians will be plundered, corporations and individuals enriched, and the American name dishonored in history.

The second step came sixteen years later, with passage of the Dawes Act of Feb. 8, 1887, which provided for transfer to individual Indian ownership of tribally held lands. This was the notorious Allotment Act, under which the land upon which the Indians depend for their existence at once began to escape from them, at the rate of nearly 2,000,000 acres a year. Between 1887 and 1934—the year when the Allotment Act was repudiated—Indian holdings totalling 215,000 square miles were reduced to 78,000 square miles. What was the argument used to persuade the legislators that individual ownership of their lands would be more to the "interest" of the Indians? In the words of Henry L. Dawes, who sponsored the Allotment measure:

> The defect of the [old] system was apparent. They have gotten as far as they can go, because they own their land in common. It is Henry George's system, and under that there is no enterprise to make your home any better than that of your neighbor's. There is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization. Till this people will consent to give up their lands, and divide them up among their citizens, so that each can own the land he cultivates, they will not make much more progress.

So, it was cupidity on the one hand, and determined ignorance of the vital principle of the Indian way of life, on the other, which effected the ruin of the American Indians. Because of the clarity with which D'Arcy McNickle presents such issues, his story of the Indians of North America, *They Came Here First* (J. B. Lippincott, 1949, $3.75), is a book that should be read by all who are eager to know this story for themselves. Even more important than the obvious economic struggle between white and red men is the basic cultural conflict. In most white men directly concerned with the so-called "Indian problem," the subtleties of this conflict produced bewilderment at best, annoyed impatience on the average, and ruthless "action" among those who demanded absolute conformity to the white man's rules as the price of Indian survival. The fact, however, is that the Indians were, and are, quite literally, *unable* to conform, and those who have survived have done so in almost complete alienation from the white man's ways.

Mr. McNickle was himself brought up on a reservation. He was appointed to the Bureau of Indian Affairs by John Collier in 1936, and it is evident that he shares with Mr. Collier the ideal of justice to the American Indians through a restoration of the conditions which will make it possible for them to renew, not the circumstances, but the principle, of the self-reliant existence that was theirs centuries ago. How this may be done is illustrated by what has already been accomplished through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934,

enabling the tribes to finance group undertakings. Both Mr. McNickle and Mr. Collier would tell us that only a bare beginning has been made and this in the face of serious obstacles and harassments—yet the beginning is real, and it grew from recognition of the moral dependence of Indian life upon ancestral forms of social organization.

With the help that this Act provides, the Apaches of the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona have for the past several years been marketing annually more than a million dollars' worth of beef cattle. The Jicarilla Apaches in New Mexico run some of the best sheep in the West, and a few years ago this tribe bought out a 30-year-old trading business on their reservation and turned it into a successful cooperative. There are other instances of tribal initiative:

> The Washo band of Indians, a tiny Nevada Indian community, borrowed $10,000 in 1938 to finance a farming enterprise on tribally owned land. The loan has been repaid and the community has a surplus of $33,000.
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> The Manchester band of Pomo Indians in northern California borrowed $5,000 in 1938 to purchase a dairy herd. The loan has been repaid and the community has a surplus of $11,000. . . .
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> The Alaska village of Hydaburg borrowed a total of $130,000 to finance the construction of a salmon cannery. This loan was repaid within eight years (1939-1947), and at the time it had a replacement value of $250,000. In that eight-year period, the cannery paid the members of the community $200,000 in wages and $760,000 for fish which the members caught and sold to the plant.
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> The accomplishments of these and fifty other tribes have their beginnings in the credit provision of the 1934 law. . . . Actual bad debts classified as uncollectable amount to less than three-tenths of one percent of the amount due at the end of the calendar year 1946.

Two things are very much to the credit of the United States in relation to the Indians. First, the United States Supreme Court has never seriously wavered from a clear statement of the *rights* of the Indians, however much the states and the executive branch of the Federal Government might violate the principles which the court declared. Second, the United States finally gave office to men like John Collier—men who have been able to turn the tide of public action in the direction of intelligent assistance to the Indians, so that they can help themselves. Studies of Indian life, their customs and laws, have shown that the Indian thinks in terms of the welfare and the integrity of the tribal community, and cannot be helped save through his community. This great discovery forms the thesis of Mr. McNickle's unusually fine book.