VOLUME III, NO. 50
DECEMBER 13, 1950

CULTURE AND GAIN

THERE is a great deal of talk about a "science of man," and there are more "studies" and research "projects" dealing with human action, the human mind, body, and emotions, than could possibly be enumerated, here, yet this talk and this work all seems concerned, not with man as a whole being, but with parts or aspects of man, taken piece by piece. The psychologists study specific reactions to specific stimuli; the sociologists study behavior under particular environmental conditions; but when it comes to the generalized question of the nature of man, no one seems to have a workable theory, or even to want to discuss the question very much.

To make such a theory scientific, of course, we should have to devise an "experiment" or a course of observation that would include the whole of human potentiality. Such an experiment is hard to imagine, unless we are willing to take the whole of life itself as a kind of experiment. But this would bring into the field of investigation a wide range of phenomena which are not yet scientifically defined, or even scientifically recognized, so that so inclusive a plan for experiment would probably be considered unacceptable.

Even without any such grandiose notion of how to gain more knowledge about human beings, we neglect basic considerations in human behavior because there are no available concepts in science to deal with them. Take what we loosely call "will-power." Everybody knows what it is, recognizes its reality, has to cope with the problems it creates, throughout his life, yet there is hardly a modern psychologist who will use the expression without remarking that it represents a mere superstition. The will, we may admit, is exceedingly difficult to define. Perhaps it cannot be defined at all to any scientific satisfaction. But it is nonetheless real.

One way to get at this problem is to examine the practical issues confronting human beings in which will, although unrecognized, plays an extremely important part. For example, there are the various monetary rewards which the prevailing economic system allots to men of varying ability. The men who reach the top of the economic pyramid are usually men of exceptional willpower, or personal determination. They drive themselves, and often they drive others. They possess a somewhat intangible but very real "force" which enables them to influence other men and affect their decisions. Men of will become top administrators, and extremely successful salesmen.

The will, it seems, is simply psychological power, without moral coloring. Great military conquerors must all have this power to a marked degree. They need skill, too, in their chosen activity, but the *will* of a commander is what creates the morale of his troops and generates confidence among his subordinates. Psychologists may deny the reality of the will—they may say the idea of the will is a hangover from an outmoded theory of man—but every man who possesses this power to a more than ordinary extent, and who uses it consciously to further his ends, knows what it is. And so do all others who have felt the pressure of the will of such men. Academic psychology which denies the reality of will power is a fraud on the facts of life. Men of great will and humanity give their energies and resources to the building of great universities, and then small-minded theorists who probably couldn't even start a hand-laundry successfully by themselves take up the chairs of academic authority and proclaim that the will is a figment, and what is worse, get other people to believe them.

A curious illustration of the confusion which results from ignoring the reality of the will is presented by a letter in *Science* for Nov. 3. The letter is from a German mathematician, now in Holland, and is addressed to the editor of *Mathematical Reviews,* at Brown University, Providence, R.I., who, in turn, sent the letter to *Science* for publication. The German scholar, E. Bodewig, announces that he will write no more for *Mathematical Reviews*—that he is going on "strike" against the small remuneration of advanced scholarship. He asks:

> What lawyer would be satisfied with the pay of a scholar? For a simple routine letter requiring no technical knowledge he demands 25-50 gulden in Holland (in Germany, as many marks, and in the U.S.A., I suppose, as many dollars). For a routine petition to the authorities he demands 120-50 gulden (marks, dollars), and that is a quarter of an hour's work. For small jobs he demands 200 gulden in advance before he begins to work at all. Later on he gets easily 500 gulden. If a lawyer had to do as much work and as much preliminary study as I (or anyone else) had to do, for example, in reviewing the papers of von Neumann or Riecheneder, he would demand 1,000 gulden and get it and be upheld by any court. What do I or anyone else get for this? Nothing. . . .
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> I wrote a book on *Numerical Methods* in a year and a half, working 5-10 hours a day. It was translated in the U.S. When the contract was drawn up, it turned out that I was to get about $350 (and the translator the same amount). And this in a field where one can say that no book at all existed before. Afterwards the publisher wanted to make even these conditions worse in underhanded ways. Then I canceled the whole contract on the ground of violation of its terms. What lawyer, doctor, or chemist would work for a year and a half or two years for $350? Are we scholars only for philanthropic purposes ?
>
> "Naturally," one does not use his science for making money. (It would be terrible if a scholar did what everybody else takes for granted.) But the exploitation of the scholar is one of the worst in the world. . . .

What, exactly, is the meaning of the phrase—"the exploitation of the scholar"? What theory of rewards and punishments has this mathematician embraced? Apparently, there is not sufficient "demand" for mathematical reviews for him to be paid at the rate, say, that a lawyer would be repaid for the equivalent amount of research. So, on amoral economic grounds, his complaint is without standing. Suppose he were a manufacturer who had given an inordinate amount of time to developing a commodity which was of interest to only a very small number of people, and that, finding he could not market the commodity except at a loss, he then wrote a plaintive letter to the *Journal of Commerce* to object to the lack of consideration shown for his years of effort which remain uncompensated. The claim of such a manufacturer that he had been "exploited" would be laughed at as ridiculous.

Obviously, this is not the position assumed by the mathematician. What he really means is that he is not being offered a reward commensurate with his cultural contribution. But how does one measure the monetary value of a cultural contribution? An advertising agency can measure its value to its clients by the sales increase that results. The advertising agency exerts a kind of "will-power" over the buying habits of the public, and is rewarded in proportion as a change in those buying habits increases the income of the client. But a truly cultural contribution may not affect income at all; more than likely, it will make the matter of income seem unimportant to those who are affected. Dr. Hutchins wants us to overcome our love of money. If we love money less, we shall probably have less of it, so that, on a monetary basis, Dr. Hutchins threatens our way of life.

Obviously, the rewards due to scholarship make a most complicated question. No doubt scholars should be better paid, but according to what standard? Dr. Bodewig proposes one basis of comparison:

> For example, Professor X invited me to take a position at the Mathematical Center at Amsterdam—for 300 gulden a month. I wrote to him that for that he could get a plumber. It is too bad that at the time I had not seen a newspaper advertisement for nurses in an insane asylum at 3,300 gulden a year with half room and board. Otherwise I would have recommended a nurse from the insane asylum to my "colleague," (even though she would have received rather less pay at the Mathematical Center).

Why is an expert mathematician worth more than a plumber, or a psychiatric nurse? The mathematician may have an elevated brow and a penetrating intellect, but why is he worth any more?

Now if he were a theoretical physicist, as well as a mathematician, with potentialities for atomic energy research, his talents would probably command a much larger reward than they did fifteen years ago. Today, a knowledge of atomic physics has a direct and evident relationship with *power*. The men who occupy positions of political power will pay highly for the kind of technical knowledge that will make their power more secure. Such knowledge can be made to subserve the purposes of the human will, and can exact a corresponding price.

There are only two kinds of capacity that are well paid for in this world—the power over material things, and the power over other human beings. Both are expressions of strength, both are manifestations of will. Certain skills, of course, are associated with the use of the will, in both cases, but without the will, the skill would bring very little reward. The world is full of poorly paid technicians.

But what of the genuine "cultural contribution"? Wisdom—and all cultural contributions are an expression of wisdom—has never had a high value in the market place. Pythagoras, one of the great sages of antiquity, was obliged, according to tradition, to *pay* his first pupil to learn from him. The religion of the Brahmins of India recognizes the non-commercial character of truth, for the Brahmin, who is supposed to deal in truth, is given a begging bowl upon the completion of his initiation. He is not to pervert his calling as a teacher to any earthly gain. Jesus gave similar direction to his disciples, who were to "take no thought of the morrow." No real teacher ever engages in his profession for money, although in an acquisitive society, where the teacher is not honored above all men, the teacher tends to adopt the morals of the trader and to be subjected to the compulsions of bargaining for his livelihood—an activity which is by nature alien to one devoted to education.

We can hardly share the indignation of the German mathematician; we cannot imagine a Pestalozzi or an Alcott, or a Gandhi—to name another sort of teacher—being upset by the lack of remuneration in his chosen lifework. A genuine teacher chooses his work because he must—because of his all-consuming desire to be of use. If society rewards him, well and good; if not, he will teach anyhow, and the society becomes the real loser in the transaction, for how can the members of the society benefit from a teacher whom they respect so little as to force him to live in penury?

The great teacher illustrates the combination of will with the qualities of moral responsibility and ethical purpose. The great teacher has power, but he refuses to use it in a way that will interfere with the free decisions of other men. It is impossible, therefore, to think of a teacher as a successful salesman ("successful," in this case, meaning the ability to sell people things that they either do not need or do not really want), or as a successful politician—one who knows how to unite coercion with persuasion in order to move whole populations according to his will. The great teacher tries to establish the means to knowledge as a reality in human experience. And because, as a teacher, he finds no value in exerting his will to influence the decisions of others, his personal power is turned toward influencing and controlling his own behavior.

The teacher, then—at least, the kind of teacher we are talking about—is one who deals with both the practical and the moral realities of the human situation, and is under no delusions with respect to who is "exploited" and who is not, in our society. He knows that all men are exploited by their own ignorance and their own weakness, and that the only way men will ever become invulnerable to exploitation is through the acquisition of moral strength and moral responsibility. These latter terms represent to the teacher the substantial goals of life for all human beings. In this sense, the teacher is the only true revolutionist, because he seeks to make evident the only true transforming and regenerating forces in human life.

Letter from ENGLAND

LONDON.—It has been remarked more than once, since the death of George Bernard Shaw, how very many critical estimates have damned him with faint praise. Some hack writers in the press have gone even further, and have indulged in vulgar epithets, mixed with rehash of the vituperation of enemies. Nothing of this is important, save as indicating that human nature, in face of any kind of real greatness, still shows the venom of its complacent ignorance or mediocrity. And, in any case, Shaw's contribution to the prevailing climate of opinion in these middle years of the twentieth century cannot be adequately assessed yet awhile. Mr. St. John Ervine has suggested, in a moving tribute to the memory of his friend and fellow-playwright, that Shaw's chief occupation was to stimulate thought, and that he set you thinking even when he was wrong. Certainly, his part in formulating the political and social doctrines of the Fabian Society, which still influence legislation in this country, cannot be over-emphasized. But, above all, he was the artist, both in life and in the sensitive imagination which found expression in his plays and essays.

It is more than probable that Shaw was better appreciated in France and Germany, and even in New York, than he ever was in London, in a mental atmosphere rather given to solemn conventionality. He was an Irishman, and his theatre of ideas inevitably had but a limited appeal in a country where intelligent thought about life and its significant problems has tended to be considered one of the more dangerous branches of human behaviour. Further, he was the gayest of iconoclasts—he described himself once as "digging productively, and with infinite zest, in the garden of Voltaire." He was over 40 before he gained a foothold in the theatre (he had known poverty and hard times) at a period when, as he wrote afterwards, "the fashionable theatre prescribed one serious subject: clandestine adultery: the dullest of all subjects for a serious author, whatever it may be for audiences who read the police intelligence." In 1901 he wrote *Man and Superman,* and began using the stage as a means of teaching his own religion of creative evolution. For Shaw, the clash of dramatic incident was to be found in ideas, not in persons, and, with his powerful mind and never-failing wit, he succeeded in captivating his reluctant audiences, and in transforming the London stage into a vehicle for what one writer has truly called "his compassion for hoodwinked man."

The Shavian theatre will live, if only because it achieved the fullest expression of the influences that divided the twentieth century from the nineteenth. In it, poetic temper and human understanding were joined in pursuit of the truth as he saw it. In one of his famous Prefaces, he wrote:

> This is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the only real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognize to be base.

All his life and teaching were on this theme, and he lived and taught without rancour or malice. If in political controversy his opponents complained that he was no true democrat, they were but misled by their own superficiality. Shaw disliked what he called "the conceit of civilization." He confessed that he had no illusions left on the subject of progress as ordinarily understood. He saw that any pamphleteer could show the way to better things; but (as he remarked) "where there is no will, there is no way," and so he set himself the task of arousing that will and of educating those perceptions that might lead to political capacity and a social purpose. His excursions into the field of ontology were vitalized by compassion and moral design. It was real feeling, and not mere rhetoric, that led him to write as he did in the Preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma:*

> Such abominations as the Inquisition and the Vaccination Acts are possible only in the famine years of the soul when the great vital dogmas of honor, liberty, courage, the kinship of all life, faith that the unknown is greater than the known and is only the As Yet Unknown, and resolution to find a manly highway to it, have been forgotten in a paroxysm of littleness and terror in which nothing is active except concupiscence and the fear of death, playing on which any trader can filch a fortune, any blackguard gratify his cruelty, and any tyrant make us his slaves.

Born when Queen Victoria had been but nineteen years on the throne, and dying at the age of 94, Shaw has left behind him the memory of a brave and magnanimous man, one whose kindness and understanding were unbounded, even though at times disguised by certain mannerisms. Even disagreement with his ideas seemed to find lodgement in that purposive element which he was always discovering in the stream of consciousness. To quote St. John Ervine again: "To know him was to know genius in its most fragrant form."

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

"YOU TOO ARE OF ASIA"

SANTHA RAMA RAU, whose *Home to India* was reviewed in these pages two years ago, is back again with another book, *East of Home* (Harper & Bros., 1950), in which she chronicles her informal journeyings and visitings in five Asiatic countries—Japan, China, Indo-China, Siam, and Indonesia. This book, like *Home to India,* is unpretentious, offering the reader the special advantage of feeling that he, too, given the opportunity to travel to the same places, could write the same sort of enjoyable volume. This feeling is perhaps justifiable, for Miss Rau is no impresario of travel, but a Wellesley girl who went abroad to see the world, and, having some literary facility, wrote a book about it.

But Miss Rau has an absolute advantage over other Wellesley girls, for she travelled *from* instead of *to* India, and her Asiatic origins were an open sesame among the people whom she visited. This, we think, makes *East of Home* a particularly worth-while book for Westerners to read. There is another and perhaps subtler reason for reading it. Miss Rau has a Western education. She is at home in two cultures—the Indian and the American culture. We expect someone like Jawaharlal Nehru, or Lin Yutang, to be at home in two cultures; they are "special people," and we take for granted that eminent Asiatics will address us in our own cultural vocabulary. But Miss Rau is "just" a young woman, if a talented one, and there is an educative novelty for the Western reader in realizing that a young Easterner can with relative ease become completely cosmopolitan with respect to both East and West.

The story begins in Japan, where Miss Rau's father had been sent as ambassador from India. In order to get acquainted with the Japanese people she met only officials and Occupation "personnel" at the social functions of the diplomats—she found herself a job teaching English in one of Japan's few "progressive" schools. Located in the suburbs of Tokyo, this school is called Jiyu Gakuyen, meaning Freedom School, and its story is one of struggle against great obstacles. Something of the devotion to educational ideals of Mr. and Mrs. Hani, who started the school, is indicated by their wartime experience:

> The difficulties the war years brought started with the name of the school. Great pressure was put on them by the Ministry of Education to change it because the word "Freedom" should not figure in the title of any institution. The Hanis refused to change the name, even though it meant that the Jiyu Gakuyen was not recognized as a school at all. Their graduates were not admitted to any universities, the boys were denied commissions in the army, and the girls [Freedom School was the first coeducational school in Japan]—because they were not officially students—were recruited for duty in the wartime factories. The Hanis managed to circumvent this last ruling by moving the classes to the factory and instructing the girls during their lunch hour and in the evenings.
>
> "But the saddest thing," Miss Hani [the Hanis' daughter] said, "was that often when the students arrived at our little suburban station from their homes, the people of this district used to throw stones at them as they walked to school."

An incident which occurred in one of Miss Rau's English classes seems worth reporting. The question of the meaning of the word "murder" came up, and Miss Rau had difficulty in explaining it. Finally, she suggested that aspects of the problem were being considered by the War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo. At this point, a Japanese girl said she would like to ask some questions about the war criminal trials. Miss Rau encouraged her, and she began:

> "You too are of Asia, otherwise I could not ask. . . . Our leaders are accused of aggression and imperialism. Is that so ?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> "Well, among the judges is a Dutchman, and do the Dutch not conquer and rule Indonesia?"
>
> I nodded feebly.
>
> "Also there is a Frenchman, his country rules Indo-China. The Englishman left your country only in August but stays in Burma and Malaya. The

> Chinese say they rule Tibet and Sinkiang who do not wish them there."
>
> "Yes," I said, "but those are old conquests. One cannot go back through history righting wrongs—one must begin somewhere."
>
> "The Russians," Yoko said gently, "the conquests of his country in East Europe, they are old, too?"
>
> "No, listen," I said, "I agree with you. Where conquests are so old that the people themselves have forgotten, one might as well leave *those* alone. But I think the principle should be that where a nation *wants* a conqueror to leave their country and yet they remain, that should be remedied." I stopped suddenly wondering if that applied to the Occupation of Japan. "Besides," I said, trying to put myself right, "there were other things, atrocities and so on."
>
> "Ah! those come in any war."
>
> "Well, the Allies did not go around beheading captured airmen," I said on surer ground.
>
> "Yes, those should be punished. But is it worse to behead a man than to shoot him or hang him or kill him with an atom bomb ?"
>
> "It seems barbaric to the West or rather," I said, thinking of the far worse atrocities that the West has been guilty of, their concentration camps and torture chambers, "to the democracies." Then I amended that to, "to Americans," because of the atrocities of the democratic countries in their Asian colonies.
>
> "It is," Yoko said thoughtfully, "the custom of the country. Some foreign customs seem barbaric to us, too." She apologized to me. "You said you wish us to understand these things. I do not criticize. There are many good things, but is confusing. Is it not so?"

Before setting out for China, Miss Rau took farewell of old, half-blind Mrs. Hani. "Think of us as people, not as the nationals of a country," the pioneer Japanese educator said to her. The Indian girl replied:

> "Yes, of course—as friends."
>
> "Friends or enemies," she said gently, "but at least as people. That is more important than anything."

We have not much space left for the other countries visited by Miss Rau and her party. In China, she found little fear of the Communists (this was before Mao's final victory), mostly because the people felt that the Communists could not possibly be worse than the Nationalists. Indo-China seemed just another tragic battlefield of imperialism, with the people bewildered by it all. Even some French soldiers were bewildered. One of them said: "But who are we, mademoiselle, to talk of fighting communism? Our own country is half-communist. Let us begin there if we are serious in this aim."

East of Home is far from being entirely a book of "political" content, despite the passages we have quoted. Numerous pleasant and some strenuous adventures are recounted by Miss Rau, and the description of the several-months' stay in Bali is a veritable idyl of gracious village life. But shadow of past, present and future wars and oppressions hangs heavy over Asia. When the sun of peace will drive it away, no one can say. But one thing is certain: no one can read Miss Rau's book and continue to think that the Orient is populated by either simple, "primitive," or even "unsophisticated" peoples. This is not an argument that Miss Rau makes, but an inescapable fact for the Western reader who has been under some such illusion. Without effort, and doubtless without meaning to do so, Miss Rau makes it evident that the East suffers from no need to "catch up" with Western civilization and culture. Her book, therefore, is a good one to circulate around.

COMMENTARY
FOR OUR GREATER SECURITY

DANGEROUS THOUGHTS in the *Nation* is getting to be exceptionally interesting reading. The Nov. 25 issue describes a new provision that now appears in the contracts signed by CBS radio artists. It includes the so-called "morals" clause which motion picture artists must agree to—to the effect that the contract may be canceled if the performer offends against any local, state or federal law, or does something which "might tend to bring the artist into public disrepute"—and adds that the radio artist shall commit no act "which might tend to reflect unfavorably on CBS, the sponsors or advertising agencies thereof."

As the *Nation* writer points out, the artist begins by agreeing to conform to public conventions in morals, and ends, after signing this contract, by binding himself to conform to the public relations standards of corporate enterprise. The *Nation* proposes a parallel morals clause for the sponsors of radio entertainment:

> Among radio's sponsors are United States Steel, Remington Rand, du Pont, Ford. Again and again these corporations have violated the moral standards of humanity. They have been party to the murder of Chilean miners, the starvation of Chinese coolies, the publication of anti-Semitic tracts, the building of Jim Crow communities. Imagine a morals clause for sponsors: "The corporation agrees to conduct itself with due regard to the morals of humanity, and to commit no act or thing which might tend to reflect unfavorably on the artist in the eyes of the world, or injure the traditions of free thought in America."

Other news notes on the witch-hunt and loyalty-oath front include the fact that Professor Howard Mumford Jones, eminent Harvard scholar, has refused to teach a summer course in the University of California in Los Angeles Department of English. In a published telegram to the Department chairman, he said: ". . . until your Board of Regents ceases to violate the ordinary principles of academic tenure and honest agreement between parties to a contract, I cannot, in good conscience, accept." Then there is the decision of Monogram Pictures, of Hollywood, not to film the life-story of Hiawatha—on the ground that Hiawatha was a peacemaker, and his success in organizing the famous Five Nations into a peaceful community of tribes might be construed as an expression of Communist "peace" propaganda. . . . Isn't it about time we closed up the churches—those churches, at least, which still remember and allow discussion of the life and teachings of the Prince of Peace?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

> What specific steps should be taken by parents or instructors when children resort to various forms of deception in order to do what they are afraid adults will not allow or to gain something that has been denied them?

THE first "specific step" which we suggest is for the parent or teacher to take four or five opportunities for quiet thought, and meditate deeply—and also historically—upon the *origin* of Deception. We first encounter the persistent psychological effects of the Christian dogma of Original Sin. Our psychiatrists tell us that the second easiest way to encourage deceptive responses is to *expect* deceptive responses, which is, in turn, simply mistrust—which is, in turn, an idea of innate (original) Evil.

The most effective stimulus to deception is always fear, but the Christian dogma of Original Sin encouraged deception in both the first way and the second way at the same time. Fear of damnation was an obvious part of the psychological coercion in the church's authoritarian designs on man's personal life—God was ever watchful of any deviation from prescribed codes of behavior. In addition to this, the implication of Christian anthropo-genesis was that man was "born to be bad"—to borrow a phrase from a current motion picture. Apparently God suspected his own representatives—even the ones long ordained and consecrated—for he left instructions that the monks who sought beatitude were to enclose themselves in tiny, bare cells, beyond the stimulus of any distracting sensuous temptations. (Thus God spoke to Augustine, who complained that even the straw upon which he knelt reminded him of that sensual part of his nature which must be crushed.) In sequence, the priesthood of course suspected the general population of an even greater propensity to immorality. And if God could not trust the presumably partially pure nature of the monks, and if the monks could not trust the priests, and if the priests could not altogether trust themselves, how could anyone at all be expected to trust the laity? And the laity, being reproved for their low tendencies by everyone from God to the head of the parish, quite naturally mistrusted their own children—because they, the children's parents, were not encouraged to have any faith in themselves. And the children: they were born damned, and would remain so, unless proper steps were immediately taken for their salvation.

As we have many times remarked, the influence of any widely disseminated dogma about the nature of man lives on indefinitely, despite verbal transformations and supplantations—witness the fact that, after an interval of Rousseauist optimism in respect to the nature of the child, dogmas about innate bestiality finally reasserted themselves, though this time as adjuncts of psychoanalysis or psychiatry. However understandable the causes—psychiatry is a study of destructively abnormal states, with the child psychologist naturally seeking destructive or degenerative psychic elements at the earliest possible time of appearance, which means during infancy—still the result is the same as before, the poor infant and its parents being extremely suspect. Unfortunately, then, while psychiatrists are sometimes helpful in exposing the effect of religious dogmas, they may be accused (as much as a collective "they" can be accused of anything) of perpetuating similar bias against the embryonic human being.

In any case, if we succumb to the Negativism or Pessimism of Western civilization, our child is going to resort to a great deal of deception. We must instead grant each child the "right" to desire anything under the sun, and we must be willing to recognize that there is a partial rationality, or, if we like, partial goodness, behind any desire. If our children recognize that this pleasant attitude marks our position in relation to any strange promptings within them, if we refrain from expressing instant disapproval at anything forthcoming from them, there will be no need for deception—except one, and this exception is important in its own right. Sometimes the parent who is most adept at concealing disapproval of the child's actions may yet find that the child wishes to do some things entirely *alone*. This, we should say, is an inherent urge for individual privacy, perhaps not fully explainable in any present religious or psychiatric terms. On this view the parent might admonish himself not only to refrain from being pessimistic or suspicious in regard to his child's thought and behavior, but to refrain, also, from trying to encourage the child to share *every* portion of his life with the parent. "Little Walter tells me everything" may represent an unbalanced and unhealthy dependency, rather than a perfect relationship between parent and child.

When the questioner asks about "what specific steps should be taken" to remove deception, then, we should say that the best step of all is to tell our child that we recognize his right to have, *privately*, and all to himself, part of his thoughts and part of his time. Tell him we will try to restrain ourselves from probing too persistently and too deeply into every nook and cranny of his life. And then, on top of this, we might try to be able to show that we understand the rationale of *any* thought or impulse, and that such thoughts or impulses, no matter how apparently destructive, need understanding much more than they need disapproval.

In summary, we realize that it is unfair to drop this discussion without an admission that our generalities about modern psychiatry are inadequate: most psychiatrists certainly do view children's "outlandish" thoughts and impulses with a dispassionate, non-disapproving attitude. But we have been unable to discover in any psychiatric writings of our acquaintance recognition of the validity of the Dogma of Privacy. This is perhaps because the psychiatrist, in some measure like the medieval Christian, expects to *create* all the "Good" his children may finally exhibit, imagining that he is working with a plastic, amoral embyro. But since we believe in the Soul, even if it is a non-Christian type of soul, it is unnecessary for us to assume that it is *either* good or evil—and only necessary, on this basis, to posit that it is a unit of great and continuing evolution.

FRONTIERS

The "Natural" Revolution

IF a reader should happen to carry around any clear memories of the pet hates of Sociology Professors, he will remember the unbridled contempt with which the word "natural" is almost invariably treated during classroom discussion. "What do you mean *'natural'!?"*

The Professors have a point, or rather several of them. Sociology presently defines its province as the study of what is, not what might be or should be. And, as the Professors remark, nothing is more "natural" than what is, however discouraging the reality. Further, with so many people naively assuming that there is a sort of cosmic validity to their private conceptions of what is "natural," there is value in noticing that the assured assumptions of one age become the rejected superstitions of another. But the Professors also have too much in the way of scorn. There are mystical promptings for the search for the "natural," over and beyond naïveté, we think, and these promptings have both philosophical and cultural value.

Our exact sciences sometimes give us pause to consider that Nature may be more an entity than an abstraction. The mystery of the "source of life" is always with us, whether we enter the field of atomic physics, that of biology, or chemistry. Mysticism about Nature, too, is a *human* reality, and it is precisely because this reality cannot be escaped, any more than any other, that people who especially lean towards being "nature worshippers" can yet make noteworthy contributions to our society.

J. I. Rodale and family and friends have recently come forward with a third publication to add to *Organic Gardening* and *Organic Farmer,* the latest venture being called *Prevention.* The psychological background is the same for all three—the conviction that "nature's ways" are the best, whether we are growing privately for pleasure, growing for profit, or trying to improve our health. *Prevention* is behind organically grown health-foods, and against fix-it-quick-at-any-cost medicine. Besides useful factual articles on problems of nutrition, analyses of the usually unknown harm of synthetic products are supplied. The September issue, for instance, has an article on the damaging-to-eyesight effect of carbonated beverages.

It is more and more apparent, statistically, that we cannot win when we exploit, that the families of the men who made money from present dust-bowl areas finally suffered more than was originally gained, that miracle growth-stimulants and miracle poison-sprays (to make up for the lessening of natural protection against disease provided by undepleted soil) work incalculable harm on health.

The June 22 *Congressional Record* tells the story of the successful campaign for passage of House Resolution 323, authorizing appointment of a committee to investigate poison sprays, harmful food supplements and preservatives. Congressman Miller (Neb.) submitted substantiation of Rodale's thesis by pointing out that the resolution "is very necessary because of the use of chemicals substituting animal and vegetable fats in food. As the gentleman from New York reports, there were two bakery companies that used some 10,000,000 pounds of chemicals in bread last year."

The November issue of *Organic Gardening* reports another positive step, this time taken by the "nature worshippers" of Pennsylvania. Some day the recommendations of such groups may be adopted—from both enlightenment and necessity—by legislative bodies. The Soil and Health Foundation of Pennsylvania has been incorporated for the following purposes:

> (*a*) To promote, foster and encourage the use of humus and other organic matter in order to maintain and improve soil fertility, to prevent soil erosion, and to improve the health of man.
>
> (*b*) To conduct, engage in, foster and encourage scientific research and study and teaching, training,

> informing and educating the public on and concerning the soil, foods and health of man—and their relation to each other.
>
> (*c*) To study the effects of organic and artificial fertilizers on soil, plants, animals and man.
>
> (*d*) In order to accomplish the foregoing purposes to establish, use, maintain and operate farms, schools laboratories, experimental stations, publishing houses and all other appropriate agencies, means and instruments.

For those who have read and appreciated such works as Vogt's *Road to Survival,* or Roy Walker's more philosophical treatment of soil and nutrition problems in *Bread and Peace,* there is good cause to mention *Green Glory,* a recent book by England's foremost forestry expert, Richard St. Barbe Baker. An introduction by Sir Howard Spring supports much of what we have suggested on behalf of the "mystics" who love "nature" and religiously believe we cannot reach happiness without kindness to our natural surroundings:

> The farther we go into the matter the more deeply we apprehend that men and trees, grass and birds, the beasts of the field and all living things, are held in a balance that may not lightly be disturbed. Even that which seems meanest is a note in what should be a harmony and is too often a discord; which is the inner meaning of that strange saying that not even a sparrow shall fall to the ground "without your Father."
>
> Not till this is far more deeply understood than it is today will man approach that condition of prosperity which he now all too often imagines can be reached by "gadgets." Fall in with the ways of Nature and prosper; fall out with them and disaster is inevitable. Not that "falling in" means acquiescence with all that Nature wants to do. No farm, for instance, is "Nature" as it would be if left to its own devices. The point is that Nature must be coaxed and wooed, not ravished; her ways of going to work must be understood and sympathized with if we are to attain the ends which are both ours and hers. And in the long run there must always be a sense in which man in relation to Nature, is both slave and master. But this is too wide a subject to be gone into here.

Mr. Baker is a lover of the forests. And since love leads to poignance in drama, we will discover a powerful impact in the author's linking of forest facts and figures with human meaning.

Has it Occurred to Us?

"TAKE a man at his word" is an old admonition, but in modern times the counsel has about as much force as injunctions of the turn-the-other-cheek genre. Proud of our new knowledge of the complexity of human nature, we ask—taking incidental delight in our own sophistication—"What word ?" It is never difficult to marshal many betrayals, to rehearse innumerable instances of taking a man's word, only to be ourselves "taken in." We may agree that it is pleasant to be able to rely on someone else's honor, and we are always grateful for those among our friends (perhaps we think them our only real friends) whose word we have found trustworthy. But we are likely to think that taking every man at his word is to expect altogether too much of human nature.

Has it occurred to us that the admonition to take a man at his word is not so much a pious hope that the other fellow may have good faith, as a cue to ourselves, a talisman for our own heart? Certainly no one will dispute the possibility of being disappointed by what someone else does. Yet it is equally clear that we can control only one person's disappointing conduct—our own.

What is our influence? What are we making it? What does it arouse in others? Useless to complain that no one "understands" us. Either the other person's reaction is impelled by some trait or attitude of our own, or it is not. If it is not, if it arises independently, so to speak, if it is injected without rhyme or reason and completely out of context, we can overlook it as none of our business. The reaction will not concern us nor disturb us, there being nothing to connect "us" to it.

What we know as disturbance, or resentment, is commonly assumed to be sufficient excuse for disgruntled remarks about other people's obtuseness, or even malice. We find it pleasant to believe that our influence has not been appreciated, and we consider ourselves righteous in concluding that there is no use trying further. In this state of mind we are all the more aware of the futility of the suggestion to take people at their word. Life—or "whatever gods there be," in Emily Bronte's phrase—has, however, a curious and perhaps frustrating way of dealing with the "misunderstood." Far from removing the hapless one out of reach of unfavorable human relationships, Life seems to set a firm chin and stubbornly present the poor unfortunate with "more of the same." The pricks, when kicked, are sharpened, rather than dulled.

Again, it would be convenient and relaxing to blame Life and the gods, and, if no other course were open, we would have to be satisfied with a perverse stoicism and report to all comers that Life is against us. Unhappily for this lazy assumption, there is another way. Happily, for man's self-respect, there is something he can do about all misunderstandings.

Observing as a third person, we have no difficulty in perceiving, when two other people are vigorously misunderstanding each other, that the feeling is perfectly mutual. One may be vehement, the other calm, but each is constituting himself the irresistible force *and* the immovable object. Each one's "influence" is, so to speak, at maximum intensity but in minimum flow. Neither will take the other's "word"—nor his most passionate professions. Each considers the other incorrigible, unyielding, unfair, and, of course, wrong. Yet, curiously enough, the third person, so long as he maintains his neutrality, is compelled to notice that no one fits the denunciatory adjectives so well as he by whom they are spoken, and that each contestant is achieving a remarkably life-like portrait of himself in the description he draws of his adversary.

When we view a misunderstanding thus, in the abstract, sometimes the notion arises that the sole purpose for the tempestuous occasion is that each participant, by retailing some of his most disagreeable qualities (usually at the top of his voice and with amazing eloquence), is approaching self-discovery, albeit over a rough road! Let us, at this juncture, assign the tremendous by-play to something more human than "Life." Perhaps we should have the gods on hand, for at least *they* could savor the situation to the full except that, after all, who has the right or the need to see clearly the actual state of affairs so much as the two individuals simultaneously caught up in strong self-delusion?

We may observe and sagely remark the heedless scorn and anger visited by a man on someone who "misjudges" him. Heedless, self-defeating scorn, we see it is, for while preventing the man from understanding the other person, that scorn also interferes with self-understanding. Possibly, we should resent our own resentment (as soon as we are conscious of it), and never the resentment directed towards us by someone else if only for the reason that nothing but our own feelings can come between us and our peace of mind.

In moments of abstraction, we realize that we could take a "third-person-view" of each of our relationships, of every situation which engages our feelings. Whether stirred by faith or suspicion, by hope or fear, we could step out of character—or, rather, out of our present emotional role—and take the time to determine what new-old aspect of our "influence" we are demonstrating. Has it occurred to us that when we are able to take every human being at *his* word, it will mean that there are left no unresolved illusions in our own being, that there is nothing in ourselves we fear to face or are unable to deal with? Has it occurred to us to take ourselves at our word—or words?