VOLUME II. NO. 33
AUGUST 17, 1949

GREAT REFORMERS: EDWARD BELLAMY

THE distance in time between Edward Bellamy and the present is not very great—scarcely more than half a century—but a vast desert of disillusionment separates the author of *Looking Backward* from the generation which finds social truths of first importance in such books as Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and George Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*. Bellamy's unfearing dream of the future seemed to approximate the inarticulate aspirations of millions in the 1880's; yet in the 1940's, so far as the "millions" are concerned, he is almost forgotten. A curtain more opaque than any "iron" frontier has cut off the present from the idealism of Edward Bellamy: it is the sense of human failure, of willing compromise with timidity, that pervades the modern world. For while in Bellamy's time, the world still seemed capable of revolutionary change, challenging the reformer instead of embittering him, today the very structure of the "progress" which revolutionists and reformers thought they were achieving has grown into a pattern of confinement of the human spirit.

So, for the inhabitants of our Brave New World, Bellamy seems the prophet of some might-have-been society that the world has long since passed by. His centrally controlled socialist state, with its equally shared prosperity, its elimination of wasteful competition and its recognition of personal achievement as the sole distinction among human beings—so attractive to the nineteenth century—is now looked upon with only suspicion. We *know* something about socialism, we say, and wonder at the simplicity of the generation that greeted Bellamy's masterpiece of social invention with such fervent hope.

Looking Backward, 2000-1887, which appeared in January, 1888**,** is a utopian romance in which a sophisticated Bostonian awakes one morning in the United States of the year 2000, to find that his country has developed into a material paradise. War, economic injustice, the class struggle, crime, are virtually extinct. The capitalist nightmare of the nineteenth century has become the realized socialist dream of the twentieth century. This painless transport into the future so fascinated the America of Bellamy's time—the Haymarket riots had occurred in 1886—that within two years more than 300,000 copies of the book were sold. Nationalist clubs sprang up to spread Bellamy's ideas. (Bellamy called his social theory "Nationalism" to avoid association with the "class struggle" idea of the Marxists, for which he had no sympathy.) The reason for this popularity, which soon assumed the proportions of a "movement," was well described in a magazine article published on the occasion of Bellamy's death:

> Mr. Bellamy's great and distinctive merit is that by clothing the Ideal in the apparel of the Real, he inspired us with a hope of its speedy attainment. It was this note of hope, the hope which his gospel had brought to his own soul, that took the world by storm; for who would not find his own burden light, in the belief that his children should be delivered from it? (Katherine P. Woods, *Bookman*, July, 1898.)

But if that hope proved itself vain, why return to Bellamy's ideas; why, indeed, call him a "great reformer"? To answer this question, reference must be made to Arthur E. Morgan's full-length study of Bellamy's life and works (Columbia University Press, 1944), for in this volume Bellamy emerges as much more than the fortunate author of a popular utopian romance. Two substantial rewards await the reader of Morgan's *Edward Bellamy*. First, there is the portrait from childhood of an extraordinary man—what he thought from year to year, the resolves he made and kept, what his religion was and why he believed it, the work he mapped out for himself and how he carried it through. We usually come

to the study of most great men after the veil of centuries has interposed its shadows, reading more of a myth than of a man. But in Dr. Morgan's Bellamy, something of the heart of greatness is unfolded in an idiom we can understand. His book is hero-study, not hero-worship.

The second reward of this reading lies in its guidance to the central dilemma of our age. All the schemers of utopias and authors of revolutionary projects of the past two or three hundred years have provided careful descriptions of a regenerated society—Bellamy is no exception—-but have neglected to explain the actual process of *human* regeneration. They merely imply that people become better as society is reformed. In other words, most utopias are twice-born communities inhabited by once-born human beings. We know what we want of a twice-born community—we want it to be on the side of the moral individual, instead of against him. So we construct in our imagination the kind of society that will give free play to the moral individual—we *assume,* that is, the existence of an enlightened social morality and then describe what are supposed to be its practical results in terms of institutions. But this habit, it seems, is a tragic self-deception. When we erect these "ideal" social institutions, they often work in reverse; or, after we get them well established, they seem largely irrelevant to what in the meantime have become the basic problems of society.

As the practical designer of social institutions, Bellamy can hardly be called a failure. Jevons, the nineteenth-century economist, wrote that Bellamy's proposal for an organic economic society would "stand a rigid examination for workability in its essential features." And Dr. Morgan contributes the interesting observation that "Bellamy's economy was substantially that of ancient Peru." Socialism under the Incas, he points out, "achieved miracles of production, and a higher degree of economic security than the world had known before, . . . a telling answer to the claim that government cannot be efficient. . . ."

While the Nationalist movement did not succeed in establishing Bellamy's brand of socialism, its program of "first steps" is almost "a catalogue of social legislation of the past half-century." These reforms included municipal ownership of utilities, direct election of Senators, the merit system in civil service, the inheritance tax, parcel post, woman suffrage, a longer school year for children, better child labor laws, juster wages and hours for workmen, elimination of industrial abuses, public ownership of irrigation systems, and soil conservation. Dr. Morgan writes:

> The surprisingly large part of its "first steps" that already has been achieved includes much of the advanced "New Deal" legislation which has been accepted by both political parties. Some of the men directly responsible for that legislation are in direct line of descent from the First National Club of Boston, or received their first social stimulus from *Looking Backward.* Other elements of social legislation now looming on the horizon were substantially parts of the Nationalist program.

On both theoretical and practical grounds, therefore, Bellamy qualifies as a "social engineer." In theory, he dealt with basic economic needs, setting aside the conventional symbols of economists, while the "first steps" of the Nationalist program made a frontal attack on glaring imperfections of the social system of the time. Thus Bellamy not only possessed extraordinary social imagination; he was also strictly practical in applying his principles to socioeconomic processes. Where, then, did the weaknesses of his proposals lie?

Bellamy once told B. 0. Flower, editor of *Arena: "*If I thought socialism would not insure full freedom for the individual and foster intellectual hospitality in the realms of ethical, scientific, and philosophical research, I should be the first to oppose it." In other words, Bellamy took for granted that the unified socialist state would place the highest value upon the freedom of

the individual, whereas, historically—in modern times—the very opposite tendency has prevailed. And what good is even fabulous "prosperity" if four fifths of this wealth must be devoted to war and preparation for war, while the masses of people are held closely to tasks designated for them by the conscripting Garrison State? Perhaps the Peruvians did make socialism "work"—but they didn't have to prepare for and against a rain of atomic bombs. Nor is skill in devising efficient institutions, as Dr. Morgan observes, a guarantee of freedom.

In his plans for the twentieth century, Bellamy overlooked these possibilities. Because, perhaps, he had already solved the problem of social morality in his own life, he didn't realize that there is a definite plateau which men must reach as individuals before the best of social plans will work. The problem might be put in this way: In every period of history, men have to learn the fundamentals of the human relationships peculiar to their time. If they fail, whatever else they do, they work against themselves and against each other. The age-old ethical verities of the great religious teachers may afford the key to the problems of every epoch, but each cycle requires its own peculiar turning of that key. And each man, let us say, has to make that turning for himself. If enough men turn the key, then what is called "social progress" becomes a possibility. But if only a handful of idealists make that essential adjustment—and if, as seems so often the case, even they remain unconscious of what they have done as individuals—then even the most carefully schemed-out revolutions and reforms turn out to be self-defeating.

This analysis seems to have support from the life of Edward Bellamy. He was born in 1850, in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts—a community which was typical of the past as well as of the future development of New England. Its past was rigorously Calvinist, with moralistic stress on personal integrity. Its future was industrial—when Bellamy was growing up, a Chicopee Falls textile mill was housed in a single building a third of a mile long. What Bellamy saw of wage slavery in New England made him a socialist; what he learned of Calvinism made him a pantheist—as Morgan says, he "broke free entirely from Calvinist theology, and—as many religious liberals did not—from Calvinist psychology." By the time he was twenty-four, he had formulated his philosophy of life—"The Religion of Solidarity." Saved from West Point and a military career by his failure to pass the physical examination of the military academy, Bellamy became a journalist. He married a girl who had been informally adopted by his family. They lived abstemiously, for Bellamy never did for a living what he could not believe in as a man. He even poured his small savings into projects he thought worthy—such as a penny newspaper for Springfield, Mass., which lasted about nine months.

In his writings, Bellamy dealt with the most fundamental problems of human life, overcoming them, getting them, as problems, out of his system. *Dr. Heidenhof's Process* faced the horror of religious guiltiness. *Looking Backward* was the approach of an unprejudiced mind to the social question. And in the *Religion of Solidarity,* Bellamy recorded his ultimate convictions concerning the nature of man.

Bellamy was a utopian who did not wait for the good society to be born. He lived his utopian life throughout the last half of the nineteenth century. It might be fruitful to think of him as a "twice-born" individual, to study his life in the light of this idea, for he was a man who could apply his personal principles without ever working against himself. Bellamy, and a few others like him, were fit to live in a free, socialist community. Bellamy's whole life, in fact, was a kind of socialist community in little, as he conceived all human society should be.

What made Bellamy what he was? We have no answer to this question, unless it be taken from

his own expression of what he felt himself to be. In *The Religion of Solidarity,* he wrote:

> There are few of an introspective habit who are not haunted with a certain very definite sense of a second soul, an inner serene and passionless ego, which regards the experiences of the individual with a superior curiosity, as it were, a half pity. It is especially in moments of the deepest anguish or the maddest gaiety, that is, in the intensest strain of the individuality, that we are conscious of the dual soul as of a presence serenely regarding from another plane of being the agitated personality. It is at such times as that we become, not by force of argument, but by spontaneous experience, strictly subjective to ourselves, that is, the individuality becomes objective to the universal soul, that eternal subjective. The latter regards the former as a god is conceived to look upon man, in an attitude passionless, disinterested, yet pitiful. Often does it happen in scenes of revelry or woe that we are thus suddenly translated, looking down calmly upon our passion-wrung selves, and then as with an effort, once more enduring the weeds or tinsels of our personal estates. At such times we say that we have been out of ourselves; but in reality we have been into ourselves; we have only just realized the greater half of our being. We have momentarily lived in the infinite part of our being, a region ever open and waiting for us, if we will but frequent its highlands. We call such an experience abnormal; it should be normal.
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> We dwell needlessly in the narrow grotto of the individual life, counting as strange, angelic visitants the sunbeams that struggle thither, not being able to believe that the upper universe is our world to live in, the grotto of the personality a mere workshop. We are content to conjecture from occasional intuitions a world that we should constantly recognize. The half-conscious god that is man is called to recognize his divine parts. The soul then is what it would be. It has the infinity it craves.

Letter from
CENTRAL EUROPE

INNSBRUCK—As a consequence of World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy fell into pieces. The Czechs and the Slovakians on the one side, the Hungarians on the other, formed independent states, and several parts of the grand Monarchy were incorporated into Balkan communities. The transaction was defended by the Western Powers, including the USA, on the theory that these minorities had been suppressed by the Imperial authority, and that every group should have opportunity to found a state of its own nationality. Of the former Empire, only its German-speaking heart was left, and the capital, Vienna.

One provision of the Austrian Peace Treaty, imposed after World War I, was more regretted than all the others, especially as this arrangement obviously contradicted the idea that national minorities ought to decide their own political existence: the provision under which the Tyrol, for a thousand years populated solely by Tyroleans, was divided into two halves, the southern part being given to Italy. The promise of the National Socialists to reunite Southern Tyrol with the nation was certainly responsible for the fact that quite a number of Austrians joined their party—many of whom turned their backs on the German dictator when it became evident that the promise could not be redeemed. That the Allies put so much emphasis on this situation in their broadcasts to Austria, especially during the last year of World War II, and definitely promised the return of Southern Tyrol, proves how well they were informed of the psychological attitude of the Austrian citizen. The breaking of this promise, after the war, has undermined their position in this country perhaps more than any other measure.

There is no doubt that the Italian Government has accomplished much economic improvement of the annexed territory. But since it has, at the same time, settled a number of Italian families there, the expectation of the Tyroleans that the region will, in years to come, lose its Tyrolean character altogether has grown strong.

These circumstances have naturally strained somewhat the relationship between Austria and Italy, but the shadows over the southeastern and eastern boundaries of Austria are far deeper. Since 1945, crossings of the Austrian-Yugoslavian borders have practically ceased. The Yugoslavians have stopped any traffic out of and into their country so effectively that the roads crossing the frontier, formerly massed with motors and other vehicles, are overgrown with grass and weeds. Woe to any person who approaches the borderline; the Yugoslavian officials either arrest him—often on Austrian territory—or make use of their machine guns.

While, until about six months ago, communications between Hungary and Austria continued, although under difficulties, the Hungarians have since created a belt of no man's land on their side. Except for a tiny distance, where building is still going on, they have completed a continuous rampart of trenches and wires along the many miles of the boundary. Every section is surmounted by a watch-tower, manned with heavily armed soldiers to stop fugitives who, since the introduction of Communist rule in Hungary, have swarmed into Austria.

Austria, possessing neither pit-coal nor iron, lacks a number of other interdependent industries. Nor has she an outlet to the sea. As the Iron Curtain has gone down on her southeastern borders, and as other neighbors, Italy and Switzerland, are themselves importers of basic materials, Austria now depends on her natural partner, Western Germany. These are the reasons why, during recent months, not only government officials, trade unions, and private organizations, but even leading officers of the French Control Commission in Austria, have been trying to persuade the USA occupation authorities of Western Germany to open up the borders which—obviously, to prevent another approachment between Austria and Germany—have been hermetically sealed since May, 1945.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
WOBBLY

THERE are several books which no one who wants to understand the American social scene should be without. Among them are Lincoln Steffens' *Autobiography,* Louis Adamic's *Dynamite* and his *My America,* Irving Stone's *Clarence Darrow for the Defense,* and Oscar Ameringer's *If You Don't Weaken.* These books break into a thousand pieces the familiar, stereotyped judgments of early American "radicals" and labor leaders. They are also the stories of the lives of men who deliberately chose to spend their lives at work which made them unceasing targets for the rage of indignant "respectable" people—people who never took the trouble to find out what lay behind the sudden outbreaks of violence that were so frequently associated with strikes of the railroad employees, the miners, the textile workers and agricultural laborers of the United States. Quite possibly, the theory of the "class struggle" would never have gained the extraordinary intellectual authority it has had for revolutionary thinkers, if public opinion had not been persuaded that the men these books deal with were enemies of all peaceful and reasonable human relations.

Another book may now be added to the list—*Wobbly,* by Ralph Chaplin, published by the University of Chicago. Mr. Chaplin's story of his life as an active member of the I.W.W. —the Industrial Workers of the World—recalls and adds to all these other books, filling out the picture of the epoch they deal with, while unfolding an engrossing drama of its own. Logically, as a book about the "working stiffs" who tried to build "One Big Union," *Wobbly* ought to have been printed on newsprint, cut down in size and sold for a quarter. This would give it some hope of a wide circulation—not among present-day wobblies, who are said to disapprove the book on the ground that Chaplin is not "representative"—but among the non-literary and largely non-political millions who have no knowledge at all of the things this book contains, and small chance of getting it from five-dollar books.

It is generally admitted by students of the labor movement in the United States that the I.W.W. fought many of the crucial battles in the history of American labor, and that the craft unions reaped the results. The wobblies won decent working conditions in the lumber camps of the Northwest; in ten weeks they forced the woolen mills of Lawrence, Mass., to raise wages and reduce the working hours of twenty thousand mill workers. They fought a pitched battle with the Pennsylvania State Troopers, gaining a complete victory for the strikers against the Pressed Steel Car Company.

What brought on these violent struggles? In Lawrence, for example, in 1912, typical wages were from $5 to $7.50 *a week,* and in slack times the head of a family often brought home less than three dollars on pay day. More than 17 per cent of the babies born in Lawrence died within a year, mostly from undernourishment. Everywhere in the United States, low paid laborers, unskilled laborers, found that the I.W.W. was their only champion.

Ralph Chaplin was the son of a Kansas farmer who moved to Chicago. The family was poor and Ralph went to work as a commercial artist, tinting photographs, as soon as he graduated from school. It is evident that he might have achieved considerable success in his profession, had he stuck at it, but he was a fighter by nature, and whenever the challenge of work for the I.W.W. faced him, he would quit his job and serve his union. It was not always a matter of quitting. The studios where photographs were colored enjoyed a precarious existence at best and one season Chaplin left Chicago for Texas to follow the harvests. Of this experience, he wrote:

> The normal relationship between harvest workers was one of suspicion and distrust. We shared the policy of dog-eat-dog with the human pack who preyed upon us, the "shack" and judge who shook us down for stealing rides, and the farmers who haggled

> pennies when it came time to pay off and sometimes refused to pay at all. Our wages at best were pitifully low, a dollar and a half to two dollars a day in northern Texas to a possible two-fifty a day in the Dakotas and Canada. And we worked from twelve to sixteen hours a day. Our farmer bosses, rich and poor alike, were inclined to treat us as human outcasts beyond the law. Living in that atmosphere, many learned to look upon themselves as such.
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> . . . not until the rebel songs of the I.W.W. resounded from every threshing rig, every freight train, and not a few "hoosegows" did the situation finally change. It was the hard-bitten, hard-hitting, much-hated I.W.W.'s who did the job of eliminating the bootlegger and hijack. It was the bitter medicine of job organization that brought John Farmer to his senses and straightened out the crooked judge, the grasping brakeman, and the high-handed policeman and railroad detective.

Chaplin wrote poems and songs chronicling the mood of his adventures. His best known song is probably *Solidarity Forever*, a kind of wobbly anthem. He knew intimately Big Bill Haywood, and later, Eugene Debs, both of whom he greatly admired.

While *Wobbly* is a personal history rather than an attempt at outlining the history and philosophy of the I.W.W., it is nevertheless a vivid panorama of the epoch of wobbly triumphs—from about 1906 to 1916—and an intimate account of the various forces which led to the decline of the movement. The wobblies were frankly revolutionary. The Preamble of the I.W.W. declares, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Instead of asking a "fair day's wage," it demands "abolition of the wage system." It proclaims the "historic mission" of the working class to "do away with capitalism" and to create through industrial organization "the structure of the new society within the old."

Chaplin's own disillusionment with the ideals of the class struggle came slowly. His experiences with Harry Bridges while editing the *Voice* of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific Coast, so alien to the personal independence of an old-time wobbly, were only an unhappy climax to the massive development of "organization" in the labor movement to the exclusion of active participation of the rank and file. "It was more"—Chaplin writes—"than the death throes of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific Coast that I was witnessing; it was the final convulsion of the type of labor unionism that I had known throughout the years."

The wobblies were proud of their disregard of all issues but the struggle with entrenched industrialism. They made no attempt to formulate a complete social philosophy. They were the individualists of labor—almost its anarchists—and they fought their enemies openly, without pretense. Despite their mood of violence—and it should be remembered that they seldom started the violence, but gave as good as they received after the violence commenced—there is an atmosphere of uncompromising courage noticeable in all the events with which the wobblies were connected, and an integrity of purpose that does honor to these champions of the exploited, unskilled workers of the world.

The most dramatic portion of the book deals with the arrest of more than a hundred members of the I.W.W. in Chicago late in September, 1917, for opposing the "capitalist" war. They were taken to the Cook County jail and held for trial before judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Chaplin, Bill Haywood and a few others were given twenty years each. Chaplin was then thirty-one years old. Carl Sandburg, at this time a reporter on the Chicago *Daily News*, wrote of the trial:

> As for the prisoners, I doubt if ever in history there has been a sight just like them. One hundred and one men—lumberjacks, harvest-hands, miners, editors; one hundred and one who believed that the wealth of the world belongs to him who creates it, and that the workers of the world shall take their own.
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> These Hundred and One are out-of-door men, hardrock blasters, tree-fellers, wheat-binders, longshoremen, the boys who do the strong work of the world. They are scarred all over with the wounds of industry—and the wounds of society's hatred. All but a few have been in that horrible jail—Cook

County—since early last fall; almost a year in prison for a hundred men who love freedom more than most.

While in the "horrible" Cook County jail, vile with the filth of decades, the wobblies forced the head jailer—with threats of publicity—to give them soap and scrub brushes, and they cleaned the place up. Then one of their number instituted a program of calisthenics to keep the men in good physical condition. They organized a wobbly university in which the faculty was made up of "loggers, miners, agricultural workers, maritime and rail workers," who held classes in their various fields. An "Industrial Encyclopedia" was even planned as a fruit of this aggregation of I.W.W. knowledge.

The prison years—Chaplin served four in Leavenworth—are particularly worth reading about. The best accounts of prison life have been written by political prisoners, and Chaplin is a good writer. These chapters make the reader feel that no one's education is really complete without a prison term to acquaint him with the outcast segment of human society. As Debs said, years later, to Carl Sandburg, when with Chaplin they were sitting in Chaplin's garden in Lombard, Illinois, and Chaplin's dog snapped at the poet, "Carl, the dog was just looking for your 'graduation certificate'!" Debs and Chaplin were just out of prison, while Sandburg had supported the war.

The end of the book does not please present-day wobblies. Chaplin admits having "contributed generously to the confusion of the world." But his book offers a final text which rebels who still think in terms of the class struggle ought to ponder well: "Things used to be so simple when all we had to worry about was fighting the employers!"

COMMENTARY
WHAT WOULD THEY DO TODAY?

A QUESTION that naturally occurs about a man like Edward Bellamy is, what would he be doing if he were alive today? What, for that matter, would various great Americans—say, Jefferson, Paine, Lincoln, George, and Debs—do today? Is it unreasonable to suppose that all such men might be thinking and acting in ways that would have no external resemblance to the patterns of their former lives?

It is difficult to believe, for example, that Debs would be the same sort of socialist that he was after he emerged from the Woodstock jail in Illinois. Rather, we think, an indigenous sort of Gandhi-ism, including Gandhi's rejection of violence, might characterize his thought and action. And Bellamy—in view of his love of freedom—could hardly be the advocate of the centralized state that he proposed in *Looking Backward.* The moral theme of *Looking Backward* is the deepened sense of responsibility which pervades all the citizens of Bellamy's twentieth-century utopia. That is what engaged Bellamy's imagination, and not absolute *power,* which is both the objective and the outstanding characteristic of the centralized state of today. Bellamy was not interested in power; or rather, power, to him, was a wholly secondary consideration. Bellamy would quickly have rejected any centralized state which obtains its authority from naked power.

Nor was Jefferson an agrarian because he was sentimentally attached to dirt farmers. He was an agrarian because he believed that there would be greater freedom, more individual independence and responsibility in a predominantly agricultural society than in an urban, industrialized society. Paine, perhaps, would be the least changed of any, for his principles seem the purest, the least modified by circumstance.

All these men, in other words, gave their primary allegiance to human values, to moral values, and it seems a foregone conclusion that, if they were alive today, they would be seeking out the individual activities within the common life which now increase those values, and would be opposing the cultural institutions, and habits of behavior which now reduce them. And we very much suspect that they would have no explicit over-all plan or program for the United States, at this particular hour of history, but would, as individuals, be trying to lay the foundations of another and better social order at the intangible level of the formation of human character.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

[We reprint the following comments from a "Progressive Educator" at Oberlin College, with the thought that they complement our recent discussion of Gandhi's Basic Education system for India. American educators who read Sevagram literature or who observe the Sevagram plan in action inevitably ask what difference, if any, there is between the theory of basic education and "Progressive" education in America. The difference exists, though it is not very easy to define. It may be suggested, however, that the Gandhian emphasis upon community responsibility, through sharing the labor of village and home Production, gives a more mature balance to the "Progressive" ideal than that provided in American Progressive Schools—where "free expression" of the child is the only guiding light. The teaser quoted below seems to feel the need for correcting this possible over-emphasis, and in so doing almost exactly recapitulates some fundamentals of Gandhi's educational theory.]

Progressive education is, in essence, education based on attention given to the child's nature, needs and desires rather than exclusive preoccupation with the teacher's preconceived notion that, in general, expression is good and repression bad. Is it not also a necessary recognition of the immense importance of individual motivation as a driving force—the tremendous desire of many children to create something of their own? And is there any real conflict between these important basic ideas and the equally important basic idea that we live in a world consisting of *ourselves and other people;* and that in planning our activities we have to consider the other people as well as ourselves?

I believe in hard work. I believe that children ought to do things that are hard—provided always that there is some reason why these things should be done. I believe that people ought to finish things they start—provided the situation remains the same as it was when they began. I believe in doing a good job, even though you are a bit weary before you finish what you started. I believe with John Dewey that school ought to be life; and that is why I feel children in school ought sometimes to do things that they don't want to do—provided, of course, there is some good reason for the doing of these things. Life is a mixture of bitter and sweet—and we have to take the bitter with the sweet.

Some teachers seem to feel that the essence of progressive education is to allow children to do anything they want to; but they are wrong. The really fine teacher sets himself the task of helping his pupils to want better things than they want at the beginning. Of course he often has to start with the wants they have, for unless there is some meeting point there can be no real teaching; but even while he is helping his pupils to satisfy the "lesser" wants they probably have when he takes them in hand, he is planning and scheming to implant in them wants or desires which will provide deeper and richer meanings.

Helping pupils to achieve their desires may be either a help or a hindrance so far as good educational influence is concerned, depending on the quality of the desires. But helping pupils to have better wants or desires, and then guiding them in their progress toward attaining them—that is always good education. Provided, of course, that the teacher knows for certain that the desires he is encouraging are actually higher and better in quality than the original ones!

The modern school is said to be pupil-centered rather than teacher-centered, but this does not imply that the pupils are to select all or even most of the experiences that constitute school life. The teacher, because of his wider acquaintance with life, must take the responsibility of choosing the educational experiences that seem to him to have the greatest worth to the largest number of his pupils. But he must choose sagaciously, lest his pupils, having followed his advice, find themselves dissatisfied and rebellious as they travel the path into which he has guided them. And, having chosen for them the general direction, he must now be willing to allow them the satisfaction of making little excursions of their

own, exploring such by-paths as may interest them as individuals, and also to a certain extent giving them the privilege of determining the method of locomotion, and even the tempo of their progress. It is this second part of the formula that constitutes "Progressive Education."

[Self-questioning for teachers seems not only a good thing to recommend, but entirely natural. If we are too sure of ourselves at all times we may be too sure about just what the child should do. This teacher, in conclusion, shows that he guards against this fault.]

I believe I am a progressive educator. I also believe that I am a thinking human being. But I have a lurking fear when I read the dictum, "A few people really think; a larger number *think* they think; and most people don't think at all." Am I thinking? Or do I only think I am thinking? Am I really "Progressive" in my philosophy of education? Or am I ruled out of that elite group because I am so direly suspicious of some of the things that are being done in the name of Progressive Education? Am I really a progressive and are some of the others wrong in their practices? Or am I merely rationalizing, trying to make my philosophy fit my practice.

FRONTIERS
The New Witchcraft

IN another of its "culture for the masses" articles, *Life* (July 25) attempts to explain hypnosis to its readers. Quite apart from the fact that neither the *Life* editors nor modern psychologists know much about the subject—according to Dr. Milton H. Erickson, a practicing psychiatrist, "Any understanding of hypnosis beyond the descriptive phase is purely speculative"—the article is extremely misleading on at least two counts. First, it says nothing of the dangers of hypnosis to those who allow themselves to be hypnotized; second, it gives a wholly false impression of Anton Mesmer, the eighteenth-century genius whose discovery of what he called "animal magnetism" was the start of all modern experimentation in the unknown territory of abnormal states of "sleep."

Hypnosis undoubtedly provides dramatic "story material" for a picture magazine. *Life* uses four pages of photographs illustrating the hypnotic exploits of Dr. Franz Polgar, a psychologist. The pictures show a score of college students in various postures of obedience to the hypnotist's commands. There is the usual portrayal of post-hypnotic suggestion in the inability of a student to "see" the college dean, who remains invisible until the proper "cue" is spoken by Polgar. When Polgar puts his own hat on the dean's head, it appears to be floating in mid-air, which puzzles the student considerably.

These "tricks" of suggestion may seem merely a form of innocent entertainment, and as *Life* makes no mention of the warnings of physicians against such displays, the article will doubtless contribute to the popularity of amateur hypnotism as a parlor game. Already, in most of the larger cities of the country, teachers of hypnotism are advertising their classes in the newspapers, and their scarcely concealed promise of special psychological powers to be gained through hypnotism wins eager response from the crowds of aimless, neurotic persons who would like to become practitioners of this modern form of sorcery.

One of the famous hypnotists of the nineteenth century, J. M. Charcot, wrote at length of the waves of hysteria which travelling hypnotists left behind them after giving performances in theaters in the towns of France. People who had been subjects of the experiments, he said, became nervous and irritable. "Some of them fall of their own accord into a deep sleep, out of which, it is not easy to awaken them—thereafter they are unfitted for the performance of the duties of everyday life. Others, and they are the majority, are seized with convulsions resembling the crises of confirmed hysteria."

Do present-day hypnotists "know better"? Apparently not. The *Journal* of the American Medical Association (June 25, p. 758) has recently called for a law that would prohibit the use of hypnotism in public performances, on the ground it may do much psychological damage. According to the J*ournal's* writer: "Neurotic symptoms can be created readily by direct suggestion in the average adult." Children, being more suggestible than adults, may suffer even greater harm.

Even the use of hypnotism for medical purposes is frowned upon in some quarters. Dr. Sandor Lorand, chief of the Mental Health Clinic of Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, is on record as saying that hypnotism "makes the patient dependent upon the physician, whereas the mentally ill should be made independent and self-reliant." Dr. H. H. Hart, director of the neurological clinic of the Vanderbilt Institute points out that hypnotism tends to increase suggestibility, and that persons who are suggestible are as prone to accept unfavorable as favorable suggestions.

Probably the most popular claim concerning hypnosis—a claim avoided by *Life* in this article—is that no one can be made to do in hypnotic trance what he would refuse to do while awake. In other words, criminal or immoral suggestions

will not work. At least three specialists in the field claim that they will. W. R. Wells, of Syracuse University, L. W. Rowland, of the University of Tulsa, and George H. Estabrooks, author of *Hypnotism* (Dutton, 1943), are convinced that the clever criminal could easily use hypnotism and they cite a number of experiments to prove it. Estabrooks in particular believes that "a hypnotist who really wished a murder could almost certainly get it." His book has a nightmarish chapter on the possible uses of hypnosis in warfare. One of his proposals involves hypnotizing enemy prisoners to learn their secrets, and suggesting to them while entranced that their own country is the "real" enemy, adding post-hypnotic suggestion in accord with this idea. An enemy officer could be given false information while under hypnosis, resulting in disaster to his own side when his report is followed. The peak of Prof. Estabrooks' inventiveness is reached in his plan for a hypnotized espionage service, which seems to have endless possibilities.

These features of hypnosis pass unmentioned in the *Life* discussion, nor is there any reference to the primary fact that hypnotic subjects increasingly lose power to resist suggestion as they continue to submit to the trance state. In the case of already suggestible subjects, a hypnotic condition may be induced whether they want it or not, by changing normal sleep into hypnotic sleep. As Estabrooks says, "The skilled hypnotist can generally take the sleep-walker or sleep-talker and shift him directly over into deep hypnotism without either the knowledge or the consent of his subject."

In a short treatment of the history of hypnosis, *Life* implies that Mesmer was little more than a lucky enthusiast—half dreamer, half quack—saying that he practiced hypnotism "without knowing it." The article states that he "allegedly" relieved Maria Paradies, a talented young Viennese pianist, of hysterical blindness, but was later "run out of town" when other doctors found the girl to be sightless. The true story of this episode is recorded in Margaret Goldsmith's biography, *Franz Anton Mesmer* (Doubleday, 1934). The girl had been blind since the age of three years, apparently from some kind of fright or shock. She was a musical prodigy, and the Empress Maria Theresa interested herself in Maria Paradies' career. The Empress also instructed Dr. von Stoerk, considered the best oculist in Austria, to treat the girl's eyes—which he did for ten years, without success. Mesmer heard about Maria Paradies and discussed her case with the parents. He began to treat her on Jan. 20, 1777, and by Feb. 9 she was able to distinguish the outlines of objects before her. Herr von Paradies was jubilant. He wrote many pages to his friends, describing the "miracle" accomplished by Mesmer. But unfortunately, her musical abilities seemed to wane as her vision improved. Her parents became uneasy, for Maria was their chief source of income. Learning of this situation, the leaders of orthodox medicine in Vienna formed a committee to "investigate" Mesmer's treatment of the girl. These authorities, Stoerk among them, claimed that the cure was a "delusion," and that Maria had never been blind. The doctors now persuaded von Paradies that the Empress would withdraw Maria's allowance if she were no longer blind. Disturbed by this idea, the girl's father appeared at Mesmer's clinic and with drawn sword insisted that the girl return home. Maria fell into convulsions. Mesmer tried to persuade her to leave, but she clung wildly to the physician who had restored her sight. Her mother struck her in the face, but still she refused to go home. Mesmer kept her for five weeks, but the family scene had ruined her nerves and she could no longer see. It was then that it could be truthfully reported that Mesmer had "failed."

Did Mesmer practice hypnotism without knowing it? According to Prof. Clark L. Hull, professor of psychology at the Yale Institute of Human Relations, "Mesmer did not hypnotize his subjects." Actually, the sleeping trance now identified with modern hypnosis was first obtained by the Marquis de Puységur—whom *Life* calls a

"devoted pupil" of Mesmer—in 1784, apparently by accident. Mesmer himself deplored Puységur's methods, saying that they showed a lack of understanding and might "harm the cause." In any event, close students of Mesmer's work have made a great distinction between his method of treatment and the hypnotic techniques later developed by the English surgeon, James Braid.

Life refers to the unfavorable report on Mesmer by a Commission appointed by Louis XVI, asserting that he was "hounded out of France," and "died discredited in Switzerland in 1815." But in 1826, another group of investigators—the Commission of the Royal Academy of Medicine—reported on Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism, fully admitting its reality and importance. Alfred Russel Wallace devotes a chapter of his book, *The Wonderful Century*, to this Report, noting that it is "very little known and has been completely ignored by almost all writers adverse to the claims of the magnetizers." *Life* follows the example of the "adverse" writers—it does not mention the 1826 Report.

Mesmer, like Paracelsus before him, was a pioneer in the healing art. As the years of the present century go by, the stature of Paracelsus grows larger with every decade, and when more of the secrets of psychotherapy are known, perhaps Mesmer, too, will gain similar recognition. In the meantime, he remains fair game for the picture magazines that need to print a few paragraphs of sophisticated text to support pictures of college students in the ridiculous positions some professional hypnotist has compelled them to assume.