

## THE INCA WAS ONLY A MAN

WHEN, a little more than four hundred years ago, Pizarro ordered his soldiers to garrote Atahualpa, the last great ruler of the Inca Empire, he killed more than a human being, for along with Atahualpa died the meaning of the Peruvian civilization. Pizarro destroyed the moral authority of the Incas. He executed their king, a sacred person, dismantled their temples, defiled their traditions, and, worst of all, by stealing their treasures taught them to lust for gold. After a generation or two of Spanish rule, there was little left to remind the traveler that here, along the western slopes of the Andes, had flourished a people that never knew famine and among whom the besetting evils of European civilization were almost wholly unknown.

A Spanish soldier who participated in the conquest, afflicted in conscience, at the end of his life left to the King of Spain what he called a "legacy of truth," in which he said:

The Incas governed in such a way that in all the land neither a thief, nor a vicious man, nor a bad, dishonest woman was known. The men all had honest and profitable employment. The woods and mines and all kinds of property were so divided that each man knew what belonged to him, and there were no lawsuits. Crimes were so little known among them that an Indian with 100,000 pieces of gold in his house left it open, placing only a little stick across the door as the sign that the master was out, and nobody went in! But when they saw that we placed locks and keys on our doors, they understood that it was from fear of thieves, and when they saw that we had thieves amongst us, they despised us. Your majesty must understand that my reason for making this statement is to relieve my conscience, for we have destroyed this people by our bad example.

Of course, the Spanish soldier who sent this message from his deathbed to his king could not know that the subjugation of the Inca Empire by the conquistadors was part of the march of progress—that all of the "Children of the Sun,"

whether the lineal descendants of the solar avatar, as in Peru, or rulers confirmed in office by the Holy Father in Rome, vicegerent on earth of the Heavenly Power, would have to step down from their thrones. That other forces, constituting themselves the "wave of the future" for another generation, would some day stamp out the myth by which even the Spanish king himself then reigned could hardly be anticipated by a practical soldier of the sixteenth century. To suggest to him that mere "men" could rule themselves would probably have horrified him, have seemed to him a kind of attack on the principle of his being as a loyal subject of the Spanish crown.

Yet the idea that kings are only men triumphed in the end. When the axe fell on the neck of Charles I, his head rolled like any other man's. The heavens did not open. Instead, Cromwell only convened a parliament for longer than usual. And after Louis and his queen were guillotined, the reverence for absolute monarchs waned in France. By the middle of twentieth century, most of the remaining princes were little more than "pets," retained on their thrones for sentimental or imperial reasons. When India became free, several hundred of them gracefully retired after a few months of polite discussion. They were "only men" and they had known it for a long time.

But now that all the myths of divinely appointed authority have been discredited by both reason and revolution, and "only men" are running the affairs of the world, an insistent cry is heard that men cannot live without myths. A world where "only men" are important, we are told, is a world where no one will stay in his place and do his work. There is no limit to the impudence, no way to satisfy the avarice or to control the satanic ingenuity of men who admit no authority but themselves. They behave like children who are

left without parents to stop them from crawling all over the table and upsetting the dishes. Their governments, which rule with only "popular" authorization, know no higher law than the laws of trade. They recognize no deeper purpose in human life than buying and selling in the market place. There is no discipline save that imposed by the competition of appetites, no end to pleasure-seeking save dull satiety.

This is the case against man-without-myth, against man with no heavenly dispensation to guide him. He needs the threat of damnation to crack the hard shell of his egotism, to breed in him the docility which is essential to peace. And if the argument thus far is not enough to persuade us, the additional evidence of the last great war of the twentieth century may be added. See what happens when the political prophets of unbelief discover the hunger of the people for the myths which have been stamped out by the worshipers of "reason." They devise other myths to entice the nations into the bondage of a new despotic authority. As soon as the kings were unseated and the priests of the old order reduced to a powerless although heckling minority, the Materialistic Interpretation of History appeared to fill the emotional vacuum.

Even the psychiatrists are made unintentional contributors to this analysis. On behalf of the old security of Faith, it is claimed that the new freedom from religious authority has lost its savor for modern man, who now seeks escape *from* freedom. His disgust with himself, we are told, is really a secret yearning for the certainty he lost when he rejected the old religious psychology of sin and atonement. What has he done with this "freedom" which was once the battle cry of secular progress? To fill the boredom of his purposeless career, he pays the artists of his time fabulous sums to create themes of violence, deceit, and elaborate self-indulgence. Thus the triumph of Mammon is a triumph of self-corruption.

It is only a matter of time, it seems, until the

last resistance to the faith of our fathers breaks down under the weight of anarchic disaster, when we shall put away our pride and renounce the conceit that man is the measure of all things. But before we take this step, two questions need to be answered. First, if man must have a faith, what sort of faith should he, or *can* he, accept? And second, just what should we understand by "only man"?

The Inca order of society, referred to at the outset, should be of assistance in considering the first question. It seems only fair to regard the Inca religion as a possibility, in view of the fact that most of the argument for a return to religion is based upon social criticism of our present society, and not upon a theological appeal to infallible revelation. It happens that the civilization ruled over by the Incas included many of the things we want so very badly for ourselves. Makers of utopian romances, from More to Bellamy, designed their "good societies" after the Inca pattern. Somehow, the Incas managed to apply the formula, From each according to his ability, to each according to his need, without an overwhelmingly powerful bureaucracy to terrorize the population. They developed a non-competitive, socialistic economy that worked with amazing efficiency. Inca rule was aristocratic, but consistently just and humane. Anyone in need was immediately helped, as a matter of course, without questionnaires in triplicate and embarrassing visits from a social worker. Further, there was no laziness under the Peruvian system. Everybody worked—it was the thing to do. The agricultural system established by the Incas was a miracle of patient engineering. The ever-normal granary of the Inca State was maintained by harvests gathered from terraces built upon the slopes of the Andes mountains—terraces which would cost \$18,000 an acre, today. We couldn't afford that, of course, but the Incas could and did.

The Incas managed all these things without any knowledge, apparently, of the wheel, the arch,

or the horse limitations which only increase their achievements in contrast to their European contemporaries. And whatever the confinements of the Peruvian social system, they were no greater than those in other parts of the world. If the peasant toiling in the foothills of the Andes could never hope to rise to the station of the Inca nobles, neither could the European peasant aspire to the throne of France or Spain. But the Peruvian peasant always had enough to eat, and he had no one to fear—practical features of security which have been lacking in even the most modern despotisms.

So, if we are bound to have a religion to provide us with a sense of duty, and a theology to supply the world with order and degree, why not have the best one we can find? There is nothing unreasonable in the idea that the Inca religion was superior to the one that the Spaniards brought to Peru, if the behavior of the people and the social system they achieved can be taken as a criterion. And this, after all, is the criterion that is proposed in the familiar argument for a revival of faith. It is not a metaphysical argument, but an argument from history. So far as we can see, the argument from Peruvian history is the most persuasive.

However, in the matter of a religion we are *able* to accept, there are some complications. The Incas enjoyed their high authority as sacred personages because they were supposed to be the direct descendants of the solar orb—something a little difficult to arrange, in modern times. (No more difficult, however, than an Immaculate Conception.) The Incas did not have modern astronomy to cope with; but then, neither did the Christian Church, until, in 1610, some eighty years after Pizarro's conquest, Galileo peered through his telescope and saw the spots on the sun. If we set our minds to it, we might be able to work out a mode of sun worship that would include even fewer unbelievable elements than would be involved in a rehabilitation of the fable of the Garden of Eden and certain other aspects of the Christian tradition. Even so, there would still be

the question: How much of *any* religion of the past would be left, after it had been passed through the filter of modern scientific criticism—through astronomy, through geology, through biology and Darwinism, through psychoanalysis, the theory of basic "drives" and the middle-of-the-road psychology of adjustment? Unless we are prepared either to reform or reject much of what we call science, there would not, it seems, be very much left of the available religious traditions.

So, let us suspend for a while our attempt to answer the first question, and turn to the second: What do we mean by "only man"? Apparently, what some advocates of the return to religion mean by this phrase is the "man" who is left after the framework of orthodox belief has been torn down or has fallen away. He is a sinner without a Savior, a suppliant without a Friend.

Quite evidently, this is not the "man" that the great humanists of the Renaissance had in mind, nor the man of Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. It is, instead, the man who, when the Renaissance set him free, did not accept his dignity. It is the man who, when the Founding Fathers of the United States declared him capable of seeking his own religion, did not seek. And today, he is the man who, at this difficult juncture of history, finds himself morally unable to go forward, and intellectually unable to go back.

But let us go back a little way, if only in historical retrospect—back to the time when, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, men began in earnest to think for themselves; when they undertook the study of the Book of Nature instead of monotonously repeating the speculations of theologians. It was here, perhaps, in assiduous study of the forms and forces of the natural world, that they lost touch with the spirit of natural religion, and with the spiritual aspect of nature in themselves. It is one thing to turn against the dogmas of priest and king that have betrayed the heart of man, but another thing thereafter to deny that heart itself. To destroy the

authority of the cosmic dictator was a revolutionary act, but it should have been followed by an act of regeneration. Instead, like any crew of brigands, we took "God's footstool" for our own and made the riches of the earth and the creatures of the field all subservient to our own pomp and circumstance. We alienated our hearts from the heart of the world, and now we find in nature only the demonic powers of destruction—which, in fact, we have sought in nature, for generation upon generation. Would a Tolstoy or a Gandhi now be quivering in faithless fear at the stone-cold visage of nature? Would they, rejecting the outer securities of dogmatic religion, be possessed by the Furies? Whatever Power or Law rules this world, it surely repays in kind.

If we cannot ourselves meet with courage the challenge of the present, we can at least attempt to define it for our chastened descendants. Suppose we say that we live at a time when we have to become *more* than creatures, more than "only men" of religion, or lose what humanity we have. It might even be that some profound impulse of cosmic evolution has been at work in recent centuries—the power of time matured—exploding one after the other the human illusions of external security—to enforce the growth of man out of his larval condition of "creature" into the full consciousness of a creative spirit. We thought the earth was fixed, a static solid surrounded by the heavenly spheres. But Copernicus set the earth afloat in a sea of ether. We thought that Newton revealed the last immutable laws of the universe, but Einstein transformed them into mathematical—almost psychological—mysteries. We thought the atom set inner bounds to infinity, but now we know that even atoms are a flux of Plutonic energy, and we have usurped the place of Jupiter in releasing their impersonal wrath upon our heads.

Surely, more of a god than any we have known before is needed to renew the faith of such beings as men now are. As cosmic agencies, as

arbiters of destiny, men have developed into serious competitors with the entire pantheon of the past, and, quite conceivably, the only god that will ever rule human beings is hidden within themselves.

## *Letter from* **ALASKA**

PALMER.—Ten years ago the placid settlements of Alaska merged gently with the waterfronts and the countryside. The towns and the people lived in comparative harmony with the grandeur of the land. Today, the military bases, airfields, highways and boom towns that have sprung up through military construction and expansion of government offices clash artificially with this grandeur. The old residents are being cut off more and more from the land, while newcomers are almost completely isolated from it by the glittering and noisy but insecure economy created here by defense and government spending.

Hardly any Alaska community is unaffected, the alteration being proportionate to the amount of government money in circulation. While Anchorage presents an extreme example of the new way of life, even in remote regions the almost daily appearance of military aircraft is a constant reminder of the changes.

The Alaskan economy has become dependent upon the militarization program, there being little genuine industry here. Mining, fishing and agriculture, once predominant activities of Alaskans, still continue, but the influence of these industries is negligible. For four decades, Alaskans have talked about development of natural resources to produce goods to meet their own needs. During the war, and directly after, hopes for this new industrial development were revived; but as yet nothing appreciable has been done, and practically everything consumed in the Territory is still shipped in from the Outside at excessive cost. As a consequence, distributors, merchandisers, retailers and caterers dominate business life. Services are inclined to be crude and raw, but expensive. Because of the housing shortage, real estate values are inflated. Many persons are becoming wealthy in the pursuit of endeavors which exploit government payrollees in one way or another. A few isolated individuals concerned with attempts to create a solid, productive and permanent economy are thwarted by apathy, as well as by the lack of cooperation—even perhaps outright interference from government agencies that so thoroughly control Alaska that they cannot be by-passed. Thus, what has been hoped for as an era of opportunity has grown instead into an era of

opportunism.

There is little feeling of concern evident among Alaskans as to the dangers of being in the path of the juggernaut of the next war. Whether this is due to reckless disregard for the future, or whether most persons feel secretly that the "Russian threat" is more of a political talking point than an actuality cannot be learned from the individuals themselves. They are too occupied to take time to sort and integrate beliefs.

Disregarding the strategic military necessity, or non-necessity, of the current Alaska program, a detached observer must judge that its consequences are not good from a sociological or psychological viewpoint. It is evident, here, as it must be anywhere, that mental conflict, not serenity, results from the doing of purposeless work. Few persons appear to go about their jobs, or indeed their living, as if they felt anything to be important beyond getting or spending money. Night clubs, saloons, gambling tables and places of amusement flourish from the patronage of those in search of packaged diversion.

While much money circulates in this way, creating an illusion of prosperity, there is always in evidence a feverish consciousness of the impermanency of the regime. Because much of the work is subject to seasonal lay-offs, and because living costs make wages high in appearance only, the towns are perplexed by problems of unemployment, poverty, and relief that did not vex them ten years ago. Every type of crime, from vandalism to murder, is common.

Whether these are the natural accompaniments of any great construction boom and large-scale spending, or whether they are peculiarly significant to this period of history, these disagreeable aspects of civilization do exist to a degree not known here formerly.

These are the surface eruptions in Alaska. Underneath there lies a solid core of substantial, sober-minded individuals to whom the times are an unwholesome interlude to be waited out with the "tolerance" of people who can do nothing to change the situation.

ALASKAN CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### SIGNS OF MATURITY

OUR reviews of Book-of-the-Month Club selections have fallen into two categories: First, many volumes, chiefly fiction, the construction and popular sale of which illustrate typical superficialities and inadequacies of the modern mind. So far as such books enable readers to evaluate the psychological meaning of our times, they do have some value. We have liked to think that we are a little less cynical than some reviewers in dealing with mass-appeal literature, because we have tried to see what we could learn from such BoM pieces, and have reduced our sarcasm to a minimum.

The second category of BoM selections involves the few excellent works which seem to make a genuine human contribution. Our enthusiasm for Pearl Buck's and Vincent Sheean's latest volumes proved, we hope, that we are not unvaryingly prejudiced against everything issued by BoM.

Another selection at hand is Harry Overstreet's *The Mature Mind*, a BoM choice for August. We are impelled to deal with this particular book by furnishing quotations which seem outstanding in educative value.

Dr. Overstreet evaluates characteristically prevalent immaturities in a manner not dissimilar to that employed by Dr. Karen Homey, author of *The Neurotic Personality of our Time*, with which book he is apparently familiar. He then adds some valuable observations on nineteenth century science, which seem to us distinctive for their combining of the virtues of simplicity and clarity:

It is a truism that the nineteenth century produced great scientists. It is a fallacy, however, to say—as it is commonly said—that it was therefore a scientific period. To have properly earned the adjective "scientific" it would have had to do precisely what it did not do: cultivate the scientific attitude toward all its problems and have habituated itself to the discipline of the scientific method. It would have had to set a premium upon objectivity instead of

subjectivity; upon rationality instead of anti-rationality. The scientific attitude and method, elevated into the spirit of a century, would have made short shrift of the ego-centered posturings of supermen. What the great scientists of the century chiefly did was to remain outside the psychological, social, political, and economic problem-areas of their age. They went their independent way of research, leaving it to "practical men" to turn their discoveries into a "business civilization"; and leaving it to a dubious flock of pseudo-philosophers to turn their theories into justifications for ruthlessness. . . .

We think it also worthy of note that Dr. Overstreet has been outspoken in his denunciation of the psychological effects of conventional Christianity—aspects of the confusion induced by competing "philosophies," and "compounded by strange alliances among them":

It is notorious, for example, that more ministers lined up, during the nineteenth century, with the owners of factories and tenements than with those who sought to curb the exploitative power of those owners. Their Bible urged them to feed the hungry and clothe the naked; but their basic definition of man as a child of sin made them set so high a premium upon obedience, on the one hand, and the exercise of authority on the other, that their whole character structure bade them support those in power against those who questioned the rightness of power. Authoritative religion might want man to remain a child in his obedience and dependence, while nineteenth-century anti-rationalism might want him to remain a child in egocentric self-aggrandisement; but in an emergency, the two would accurately feel that they had more in common than either had with a philosophy that asked man to put his childhood behind him and to achieve the spiritual independence of maturity.

The typical member of our culture can express the highest idealism and practice the crassest "realism" without ever knowing that the two are in contradiction. Political speakers repeat great phrases of Thomas Jefferson, or George Washington, or Woodrow Wilson—honestly believing them; and then make shady political deals; businessmen quote Abraham Lincoln and then lobby to prevent slum clearance; the average citizen expresses pride in the American Bill of Rights, and then seeks to protect his real estate by restrictive covenants. Socrates, with his keen power to detect inner contradictions and bring them to light would have had an Athenian holiday

among the men and women of our century. What our century would do to him, we leave to conjecture.

Dr. Overstreet argues that now, for the first time, our civilization is approaching some knowledge of what "psychological maturity" may mean. Students of ancient civilizations, particularly those of the East, might quarrel with this author's implicit contention that the "maturity concept" is such a new one. It is true, however, without any doubt, as Dr. Overstreet says, that "the characteristic knowledge of our century is psychological." Significant contributions to man's knowledge of man are being made constantly in the fields of psychology and sociology.

*The Mature Mind* is itself persuasive evidence that the trend of modern psychiatry is toward self-reliance, and away from the idea that man is the victim of irrational forces beyond his control—the latter being partly a development of Freudian theorists. The "maturity concept" comes to mean the faith that man can turn any environment to good use, his only problem being to make his reactions to his environment sufficiently balanced.

This point of view is a welcome remove from the corrupt Freudianism which made it seem very glamorous to be the victim of dark, irrational, "sub-conscious" forces. Dr. Overstreet introduces us to a new psychiatrist's dream of a *rational* world, wherein the individual mind becomes more powerful than "complexes."

## COMMENTARY

### AN EASTERN ANNIVERSARY

FROM *Eastern World* (August), an English monthly devoted to current events in Asia, comes the reminder that while, in Aspen, Colorado, Western scholars this year celebrated the bicentenary of the birth of Goethe, greatest of Germans, and possibly of Europeans, in the Far East the Chinese are celebrating the 2,500th anniversary of the birth of Confucius. The apparently undying qualities of Confucian thought are something of a mystery. He no more founded a religion than Goethe did, but Confucius was the parent of a great ethical culture which has been the foundation of Chinese education ever since. Unlike Goethe, who, except for the literati, is only a name, Confucius is known alike to the common folk and the learned of China.

It is futile, in a paragraph or two, to try to suggest the subtle inspiration of Confucian thought. For this, the best source is the *Analects* themselves; but the explanation offered by a Chinese interpreter, attached to the Children's Court of New York City, for the scarcity of delinquents among Chinese youth (only one in eight years, among a population of 3,000 Chinese boys and girls) helps to illustrate the quality of the culture it has created. The interpreter, Wilbur W. H. Pyn, began by quoting a Confucian maxim:

"The misconduct of the child is the fault of the parent. Be old while you are young and stay young while you are old. It is the duty of the child to support the parents and grandparents and see that they neither want nor sorrow."

He then observed:

The child is taught reverence for his parents. Whenever a Chinese boy or girl is guilty of misconduct in public it is a disgrace not only to himself or herself but to the family. And the Chinese family is pretty big. We are 450,000,000 brothers. Here, if some Chinese boy committed the most minute crime, the whole community would know it and he would be losing face.

Among the young the most severe punishment is

to "lose face." It is most serious in the mind of the children, because it is a sort of discrimination against them. Chinese children are not punished physically. . .

The times when Confucius lived were very like our own, according to *Eastern World*. A feeling of "dread expectancy" haunted the people, and widely differing ideologies competed for popular support. Confucius built upon the principle that no lasting change could be accomplished without self-imposed, practical, ethical training. He was as humble as Socrates, as sagacious as Machiavelli, and his counsels won their way by deep psychological penetration.

The humility inspired by Confucius made men reluctant to exercise power over others. Sincerity, unwillingness to take advantage of the devices of deceit, was his safeguard against misunderstanding and mutual suspicions. Finally, he urged his followers to seek clarity of mind and purpose, and to practice a stern honesty with themselves: "Have no preconceived notions, or, at least, be prepared to cast them aside if your growing understanding of the workings of human nature shows them to be wrong."

These simple virtues form the strength of Confucian wisdom—humanist philosophy at its best. It is no vaulting of the transcendental spirit, perhaps; no mystical vision of the heights of moral achievement; but in an age which is foundering between two worlds—a world of dying faiths and the unknown world of tomorrow—the genius of Confucius may be peculiarly suited to our needs.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

AN informative report from a subscriber suggests a continuance of our deliberations concerning the child's relationship to money. If we remind ourselves that what we call money is in its best sense simply a symbol for useful work accomplished, it is easy to see why the "core system," described below, gave excellent opportunity for money education:

The new "core system" being practiced on a purely voluntary basis in the junior high school has attracted educators from all over the country. They regard it, as I do, as a tremendous advance over the older system, but many of the local citizenry look askance at it. It gets away from compartmentalized education, integrates study around a central project (core), and creates excellent morale between pupil and teacher. For example, the teacher in charge of the core system listened to the conversation of pupils as they returned from the school cafeteria and noted that they complained about having to pay 25 cents for the hot lunch provided. The teacher asked them whether they had the facts to justify their complaints, which, of course, they did not have. She then created the project of having the class prepare a balanced lunch and serve it. In the course of this task they had to interview school employees as to their salaries, find out what it costs to provide heat and light for the cafeteria, study the principles of balanced nutrition, learn about food production and transportation, visit the Standard Brands factory, apply their techniques of English and public speaking to the making of reports, etc. Also, they had to plan the division of labor among themselves and acquire the knack of cooperative work. When they had finished, they found that a lunch consisting of tomato juice, a tunafish salad sandwich, a glass of milk, and a dish of fruit jello cost them 41 cents apiece to serve—in contrast to their 25-cent hot lunch from the cafeteria. That is just one example of how it works.

A part of the secret of this experiment's success was undoubtedly the spontaneous origin of the children's interest in the cost of a meal. While other teachers throughout the country are attempting similar things, such projects are less successful when they are abstractly created by the teacher without reference to any group

preoccupation. One teacher has described an experimental program revolving around the failure of a light fixture in the classroom. The idea was to learn to understand what had gone wrong, what was needed for repairing the fixture, and to study the history as well as the mechanics of electrical appliances and electric lights in particular. And then the community's resources in terms of electricians and electrical supply stores could become the focus for more community learning. But such a focus for project education may be severely handicapped unless the child is *really* interested in seeing that the fixture is repaired. If he has no interest in his classroom as such, regarding it as something thrust upon him by the system of compulsory education, he can hardly be expected to give eager attention to its maintenance or repair. For reasons such as this, the teacher is often at a loss to find projects which are sufficiently stimulating.

The teacher who desires to find ideal interest-projects probably should spend more time with the children, in order to learn what their vital interests and concerns actually are. When school authorities are cooperative—and this is not always the case—it may be possible to pick some activity which combines educational content with enough of the children's personal interest to extend the school day somewhat beyond the regular time. Half or some part of the time could be "donated" by the school, and the other part by the children. Under this semi-voluntary arrangement, the teacher would have an opportunity to take part in the natural group interests of the children. For instance, attending a certain motion picture and discussing it afterward might serve as an occasional cooperative compromise between the school system's requirements and the child's desires.

Of course, when we reach this point in educational musings we have to face the fact that the best school would be one which the children themselves help to create—one in which every move toward the establishment of a curriculum,

rules, and even the design of the building, would be shared with them to some degree. One reason for our praise of Gandhi's experiment at Sevagram in India is that, there, the children often became at least partial participants in the construction of buildings. (Building permits and licensed contractors were non-existent, to the great benefit of all concerned with the venture.)

While many who think of themselves as Progressives in education might grant the theoretical excellence of this approach to the creation of an educational institution, the temptation to take a quick jump to the word "impractical" is very great. What needs to be remembered, perhaps, is that a *feeling* of participation can exist, even though the building code will hardly allow fourth-graders to play much part in construction activities. *Planning* for buildings is something which each person, no matter how young, can have an idea about. It would matter very little whether the idea was ridiculous or sublime, for in either case that idea would constitute the child's psychological participation. While this sort of "community approach" to the building of schools is limited to the communities needing new structures, we can always concentrate upon encouraging self-determination in every possible direction. One school in England, for instance, allows pupils to make ground rules and even to establish the length of vacations.

It is easy enough for a teacher to make the first move in such directions—which might be to have a suggestion box like those installed for personnel morale in factories and offices. But this should be only the beginning. Each child should have opportunity to *do* something about any material changes or improvements he seriously suggests, and since a child is relatively helpless in regard to changing the heating, lighting or playground systems, the teacher would need to involve himself in innumerable details of argument and foremanship, and be prepared to see a considerable amount of material and time

fumblingly used. On the other hand, the teacher would probably find that some children were more skillful at some things than himself—a circumstance of educational value to both. The most successful progressive educators, however, are those who realize that they must not place conservation of material first. Nothing is "wasted" if, in its use, there is genuine arousal of a child's latent maturity, for when maturity is developed, the child will be able to appreciate the principle of conservation. Waste is a bad habit, but who can think of the cafeteria experiment just reported merely in terms of the "waste" which must have occurred in the preparation of the experimental meal?

## *FRONTIERS*

### Victims of Moral Confusion

IN March of this year, Dr. Miriam Van Waters, head of the Framingham, Massachusetts, Reformatory for Women, appeared before officials of the State to answer charges of misconduct in office. One of the features of this "trial" was the fact that the sessions of the hearing were packed with spectators, citizens of Framingham and Boston who found the proceedings intensely interesting and who, for the most part, rejoiced in the final vindication of Dr. Van Waters and her reinstatement a few days later as superintendent at Framingham. While the report of these events, in *Harper's* for June, brings to national attention the drama behind the public defense of Dr. Van Waters' principles and policies, the fact that this defense should have been necessary at all is the key to the real story behind the affair. The attack upon her administration of the state corrective institution was apparently stirred up by the Hearst press in Boston, and pushed on to a climax by professional jealousies and political ambitions, but these factors played only a superficial and precipitating role in the controversy.

The forces which caused this attack on one who has been called "the foremost penologist of our time" are the same forces which create the need for reformatories, prisons and miscellaneous other institutions intended to "protect" society from the ravages of anti-social individuals. The people who want to understand these forces are exceedingly few in number. The great majority seem much more concerned with *avoiding* evil than with understanding it—or rather, they want to avoid the types of experience which bring them into close contact with degradation and suffering—and it is this general indifference to the problem of evil in human life that makes the problem appear insoluble.

Dr. Van Waters chose to spend her life working in the dark, unpublicized field where society harvests and hides its misfits and its

failures—where the petty logics of social status and commercial "success" all operate in reverse, and where outcast human beings are dealt with on the secularized Calvinist theory that people whom society has damned will never be any good. Why anyone, least of all "a woman of dignity, charm, and aristocratic bearing," should be so interested in what our conventional social morality looks like when it is turned upside down is itself an incomprehensible thing to many people. They are the people who immediately sell their houses and move to another neighborhood when a Negro family settles within ten blocks, and who burn with indignation if the city council even hints that a site nearby to them would be a good place to locate a home for wayward minors. Unable to grasp the reality of evil, they are equally ignorant of the meaning and reality of good, so that Dr. Van Waters' intense belief "in the natural goodness of human beings and their right to a fair chance" is for them an idea void of significance.

The charge of misconduct in office against Dr. Van Waters was a bill of particulars proving, in effect, that she did believe in the "natural goodness of human beings and their right to a fair chance." She had abolished prison uniforms. She had hired as staff employees released inmates and other persons with criminal records. She sometimes allowed inmates to leave the institution to have a meal in Framingham or to go to the movies. She permitted inmates to hire out on jobs by the day. Inmates could leave the Reformatory to attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. Other "abuses" were listed, twenty-seven in all, among them the failure of the superintendent to control and suppress homosexual activities. It was this last, of course, that the newspapers played up, to the great indignation of the Massachusetts legislature, whose members, never having been in prison, could not possibly know that a large penal institution in which sexual perversion has been eliminated does not exist.

Following upon a legislative investigation of the Framingham Reformatory, Commissioner of

Correction Elliott E. McDowell dismissed Dr. Van Waters, on Jan. 7 of this year. She at once called for a public hearing on the charges against her—the right of a removed public official in Massachusetts. The witnesses who testified for Dr. Van Waters ranged from former inmates of Framingham to the country's outstanding authorities on penology. It was learned that "Framingham had become the model for rehabilitation programs everywhere, and other exemplary institutions for women usually turned out to be run by her {Dr. Van Waters'} students or disciples." She spent the week-end which interrupted the sessions of the hearing in preparing an article on juvenile delinquency for the next edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Finally, Dr. Van Waters was reinstated as the result of the decision of a three-man commission appointed by the Governor of the state.

While Dr. Van Waters later called the opinion issued by this commission "a Magna Carta for penology and reform," she is still bound by the letter of the law insisted upon by the Commissioner of Correction, as expressed by him in "directives" sent to her in June, 1948. Under this order, Framingham must follow procedures which eliminate much of the rehabilitation program developed over many years. However, some citizens calling themselves the Friends of the Framingham Reformatory are working to gain legal recognition for the methods introduced by Dr. Van Waters, and it is hoped that a bill designed to accomplish this effect will be passed by the Massachusetts General Assembly.

Earlier in her career, Dr. Van Waters was head of the Los Angeles Juvenile Detention Home and a referee of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, and her book, *Youth in Conflict*, published in 1925, is based upon these experiences. Here, one begins to find clues to the meaning behind this life of extraordinary usefulness. The book is really a "mystery story," the record of a search, by no means completed, for the causes which underlie delinquency in children and criminal behavior in

adults. There are chapters on conflict in the home, in the school, in industry and in the community. In each of these situations, children and young people are surrounded by influences which, if accepted without resistance, make the pattern of delinquency more attractive than another kind of life. Against the traditional sources of instruction in moral ideas are set counter-forces of cynicism, contempt for already half-corrupt social institutions, the sarcasm and gossip so often heard in the home, and the idolizing of criminals in cheap fiction. On the question of marriage, Dr. Van Waters writes:

Whatever in the community cheapens and belittles the social nature of marriage, will hamper and delay development of youth to maturity. Forced marriages, marriages arranged to keep men out of prison and girls out of correctional schools, breaking up homes by social workers on insufficient reason, tend to weaken the status of marriage. Bedroom farces, screen comedies, comic strips, jokes and news-items which ridicule marriage, pollute the sources of public opinion from which youth takes its cue. . . . Morality can survive enlightenment; it cannot survive cheap, cynical degradation applied day after day. . . .

It becomes evident that the youth who are drawn into what become "criminal" patterns of behavior are for the most part betrayed human beings—immature people who do not understand the rules of a hypocritical culture and its complicated system of condemnations and approvals. As Dr. Van Waters puts it:

Young persons have the gift of hearing not only what is said, but overtones of what is not said but implied. Each social group, in silently or expressly appraising the moral value of conduct of its members, is answering burning questions of youth with reference to ethics: How shall one love oneself and do one's duty to one's neighbors; what is the right attitude toward sex, property, manners and fashion? Adults must recognize that those who answer these questions in the same way tend to split off by themselves to become members of separate systems of thought, feeling and culture. When young people violate sacred family traditions and smile complacently, it is not because they have become *anti-social*; it indicates probably that they dwell in

some other island of social-culture which smiles upon their activities, and which is endorsed by some powerful group of adults. Almost all delinquencies of youth are the expressed social standards of a part of the adult community which is under no indictment, and which flourishes without condemnation. Illustrations are so numerous as to be superfluous: graft and corruption in government and business; selfishness and indifference to the principle of welfare in industry, tend to strengthen the social position of dishonest individuals; war and violence that of all who commit assaults; the habit of using persons to one's personal advantage, the impulse to possess and to dominate other personalities in order to promote one's ego selfishly, is the root which nourishes the prostitute and her patrons, and all those who do violence to the emotional life of others.

The betrayal, however, is not only of children, for the delinquency of youth but reflects the aimlessness and relative moral anarchy of the entire adult community. How, then, fix responsibility? Setting aside the question of the occasional "incurable" as a separate and independent problem, and looking only at the moral contradictions presented by our civilization to the young, it might be said that primary responsibility for this confusion rests with those individuals who possess the capacity to regard society in cultural terms—who are able, that is, to look objectively at human beings in various social groups. Such individuals are literally the *makers* of culture, insofar as culture can be affected by conscious action. They ought to be the teachers and helpers of their less sophisticated, more "involved" fellows, setting an example by living out intelligent definitions of right and wrong, evolving cultural symbols of social usefulness and maintaining the closest possible association between moral precepts and personal practice. Instead, with some few exceptions, these individuals are found in the professions which habitually exploit their knowledge of cultural forces, as the easiest path to great wealth. It is this prostitution of intellectuality, then, which has accomplished the great betrayal, which has led to so many spurious and contradictory ideas about good and evil, turning into "criminals" the weaker

and less complicated members of society who are unable to conduct their lives according to the ruling moral hypocrisies of the age.

This betrayal is different from the tyranny of kings and priests, and having occurred in an epoch of political emancipation and of relative economic plenty, not even the "class struggle" theory of human injustice can be made to apply. But people like Dr. Van Waters, who dig at the roots of bewilderment in the first victims of cultural disintegration, are providing us with facts which are essential to any program of reconstructive change.