

HOW ARE THINGS IN TANGANYIKA?

A CERTAIN shrewd common sense frequently appears in the editorials of the *Saturday Evening Post*, such as the notice, in the issue for Sept. 24, of the fact that if the total amount lost in wages (\$246,848) during the recent strike at the Dearborn Coach Company had been invested in the Company by the striking employees, the latter would have gained ownership of about 46 per cent of the net asset value of the Company. The *Post* editorial writer observes:

That isn't quite "control," but it would be a useful proportion of the total ownership of any corporation for one group of investors to have. Maybe the smart thing to do during the "cooling-off period" preceding a strike is to figure the probable wage loss, invest it in the stock of the company, and then raise your own pay—if that seems a good idea in the role of owner.

Maybe there is a joker in this *Satevepost* proposal; not having a well-developed Business-Sophistication Department to check such matters, we are unable to single out the fallacies and pooh-pooh the *Post's* apparent interest in the welfare of the working man. But with or without jokers in this particular instance, the idea ought to be worth following up, if only as a means of eliminating some of the rhetoric in the capital-labor controversy. For an industrial union to own and operate one big plant in an industry, in competition with the other "capitalistic" companies, ought to be vastly educational. It would still be "private enterprise," for the workers operating the plant would own it in the same way that other industrial enterprises are owned, the only difference being that they would not only own it, but would control the policies of the company. Such a plant would be an interesting guinea pig from almost any point of view. Labor would have opportunity to prove the validity of its criticisms of management; capital, by encouraging the transfer of voting stock of one company to the

members of the union, could show that the familiar claim in defense of private enterprise that the industries of the United States are really owned by "little people"—is sincerely meant; and the man in the street could measure the honesty of the representations of both the unions and industrial management by noting the degree to which they cooperate with the whole idea.

This would be one way of finding out whether or not the unions are willing to accept responsibility, and whether management is willing to relinquish control, even for the purposes of a socio-economic experiment. The free enterprisers are continually talking about the "chances" the capitalists have to take, when they go into business. Well, are they willing to let the unions take the same chance? The unions complain that the employers skim off the cream from the profits of the business, leaving bread-and-water shares for the employees, and the larger unions have research economists who compile figures and draw charts to show the difference between the way private enterprise is run and the way it *ought* to be run—the *fair* way. Well, do the labor economists want the responsibility of actually running a company the "fair" way?

The experiment would be a good one, if anybody wanted to try it. And that is the point: *Would* anybody want to try it? Or would the partisans on both sides spend most of their energy in pointing out why it wouldn't work, and make up elaborate excuses for not trying it at all?

The fact of the matter is that, in an experiment of this sort, neither side could complain about the other, because both capital and labor would be on the same side—the side of complete economic and moral responsibility. Would it be fair to say that the "side" which showed no interest in the experiment was the side

that didn't want responsibility, but only something to complain about— strategic talking points in the Class Struggle?

One may be a bit curious about what the *Post* would say on its editorial page if, for example, Mr. Walter Reuther of the CIO—the branch of unionism in the United States that is said to be increasingly interested in co-ops—were to accept the challenge and inaugurate a drive to use some of the CIO's ample reserve funds for buying into industry, more or less as the *Post* suggests.

And if the CIO then began to make a success of the plant, organizing it along the lines of the Swedish producer coops, turning its economic power into a means of maintaining fair prices to the consumer, would the *Post* still think that labor ownership is a good idea? If the *Post* could be persuaded to run an impartial, informative article on co-ops, now, it might be conceded that the Sept. 24 editorial proposing the purchase of company stock by the workers as a substitute for costly strikes is *really* in support of free enterprise, and not just a little rhetorical daring—a rehearsal of the common sense that momentarily impresses the reader as "sound," but which never follows through.

Another *Post* editorial in the same issue discusses the "other side" of the persecuted minority question, presenting some more of the same good old common sense. The *Post* gets a little tired of the drastic view of the plight of minorities found "in *The Nation* and *The Daily Worker*." (More than a little unfair, this bracketing of the *Nation* with a Communist organ.) The gist of the *Post* argument could be summarized: "Such big crumbs these poor minorities get—why should they complain!" Specifically, the editorial says:

What we mean is that all over the country individuals who if they stopped to read the socially minded weeklies, would call themselves members of "underprivileged minority groups," are busy as bees making money; collecting rents from the "privileged majority"; piling up billions of dollars in Negro life-insurance assets; playing baseball before mobs which

yell for Jackie Robinson even when Brooklyn is on the road [it took World War II and the moral pressure of associated slogans to get Negroes into big league baseball]; winning racing stakes in events formerly the preserve of the Vanderbilts and the Whitneys; serving the nation as judges, governors, industrialists and what have you.

So one asks oneself, "How are things in Tanganyika this fine day?" That is to say, what happened to the eighteenth cousin of Dr. George Washington Carver, presumably still in Africa? How prosper the relatives of the Chinese laundry proprietor who owns three two-family houses? You could take this sort of questionnaire around the world, but it would be embarrassing.

Well, it ought to be embarrassing, but not to George Washington Carver's Tanganyika relatives, nor to Ah Sing's multitudinous tribe in the Yangtze valley. This proud claim that the United States is a place where *anybody* can make himself plenty of money—incidentally, how about a few statistics: There's *one* Jackie Robinson, to start with; and what about the things the United States *didn't* do for Carver, because he was black?— as though that had something to do with the conceptions on which this country is founded, or what the Statue of Liberty is supposed to stand for, has come to be the standard argument for Americanism. And that is what ought to be embarrassing to any citizen, black, white, yellow or brown, who happens to read this *Post* editorial.

Of course, we have "freedom," too, and we let the underprivileged minorities have enough of that "to work out their own individual plans and live their own individual lives, with the minimum of official interference and mamma-knows-best meddling." This is Papa-knows-best *Satevepost* talking, and you'd better listen:

The result is that a few Africans have accomplished more here than all the natives of Africa have been able to do in Africa, and the same goes for all "minorities" across the board. You can argue that the heathen in his blindness and with no television is happier than we are, but that isn't what the protest committees think. Anyway, we hate to see any of these fortunate people letting interested propaganda outfits treat them as "Irredentists" to be used as raw

material for protest groups, instead of as the Americans they are.

But if "they" are Americans, too, what is all this we-they psychology for? Did "we" do all these things for "them"? The way the *Post* tells it, you'd think so. You'd think that the *Post*, maybe because it is owned by one of the richest publishing companies in the world, and because it has nearly four million subscribers, has a right to tell the minorities to be satisfied with what they've got and go on being not-quite-but-almost-Americans.

It is just because the United States does have the greatest heritage of political philosophy in all the world that this rich man's gush about what we have done for minorities is sickening to the heart. A man or a publication who presumes to speak for the United States ought to speak out of regard for the great principles of freedom and equality for all human beings, the principles declared by the Founding Fathers, or keep altogether still. Something new, politically speaking, was born in the North American Continent at the close of the eighteenth century—something far too precious to be whittled away by arguments which represent the United States as a richly upholstered race track, with hambones for all.

An apology for racial or social injustice in the United States cannot, in the nature of things, begin with what we the people have done for those who, we imply, are not the people. It can only say, with regret, that we have trouble in living up to what we say our ideals are, and perhaps add some suggestions of things to do which may possibly be helpful in making those ideals more vital in the lives of everyone. To ask a black man or a yellow man to forget about his equality because, here, if he eats half as much as the rest of us, he may be able to acquire title to an apartment house, is to insult him with the idea that his aims in life are no higher than the terms of the argument which is addressed to him. He may be a philosopher, and know the value of patience, or he may not, but in neither case is there excuse for

adding insult to injury.

The hambone argument was a Tory argument, back in 1776. Today, it is pretty much of a Communist argument. They probably won't believe it, but the *Post* editors now stand foursquare on a platform of the Class Struggle Forever, simply because they write with the psychology of the possessing class.

This criticism has nothing to do with what some might call an "unrealistic" disregard of the facts of human nature. It does not advocate ignoring the limitations of prejudice or the slow pace of human progress. But it does assert that neither prejudice nor the difficulty in overcoming it can transform the status quo into the best of all possible worlds. The Declaration of Independence set a new standard for human nature. If the *Post* editors wish to set up new rules, with different degrees of acquisitive opportunity for peoples of different color and different religion, then they (the *Post* editors) had better "go back where they came from."

Letter from **South Africa**

JOHANNESBURG.—Starting this year, there has been much agitation in South Africa among English and moderate Afrikaans circles for so-called "Christian-National education." Apparently, a policy for Christian-National education was first formulated by a group of Afrikaners (native whites, of Dutch ancestry) many years ago on behalf of Afrikaans children educated in Southern Rhodesia. It was a policy for the preservation of national and Christian consciousness among an Afrikaans minority under "alien" control. The policy was later considered in relation to Natal where Afrikaans children were being educated in a province predominately English.

In 1948 the Institute for Christian National Education published a pamphlet under the auspices of the Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies which it was stated had taken ten years to prepare, and which set forth a policy for the Christian-National education of all Afrikaans-speaking children throughout the Union. It suggested that the task of preparing a similar policy for English-speaking children was the task of the English section of the community, but it expressed the view that the Boer nation was the senior trustee of the non-European races, and it devoted a closing section to the principles on which it was felt non-European education should be based. At the time of publication the pamphlet attracted little attention in English circles, but, as it was only published in Afrikaans (the form of Dutch spoken in South Africa), presumably only a few English people read it. It was, it would seem, almost by accident that this pamphlet came into the hands of certain English educationists who felt that the policy constituted a most serious threat to democratic freedom, and who consequently, together with certain like-minded Afrikaners, formed themselves in an Education League for the express purpose of fighting the policy. At the

beginning of 1949 the Education League launched a campaign against Christian-National education by the publication in English and Afrikaans of a pamphlet, entitled *Blueprint for Blackout*, which set out those paragraphs of the policy which were felt to be the most offensive side by side with comments pointing out the threats therein. This pamphlet, together with protest meetings held in the large centres throughout the Union, has, not without difficulty, roused the English and moderate Afrikaners to awareness of what the League felt to be a grave threat to liberty.

During the last parliamentary session, the Minister for education, then Mr. Stals, was questioned about this policy. He affirmed that it did not represent the policy of the government. Similarly the Administrator of the Transvaal, Dr. Nichols, who, till comparatively recently was a Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, replying to a question in the Provincial Council, personally repudiated any attempt to establish state denominational schools in the Transvaal. In spite, however, of these assurances, the concern continues. This is partly due to the fact that Mr. Stals, a moderate Nationalist, has now been replaced as Minister for Education by Mr. Swart, who enjoys the reputation of being one of the more extreme members of the party. It is also due to the fact that it is becoming increasingly well-known that Christian National education is not only the accepted ideal of the vast majority of Afrikaans teachers, but it is also, and indeed has been for many years, the accepted policy in a number of educational institutions up and down the country. The present anxiety is part and parcel of the whole tension between two schools of thought among the white population in South Africa. These schools of thought are not, as has been already indicated, all English on the one side and Afrikaans on the other, for there are among the Afrikaans people a vast number who are profoundly uneasy at the trends among their own race, and particularly so at any attempt to use education as a weapon for the establishment of a

dominant Boer nation in South Africa.

Nor must it be thought that this Christian-National educational policy is simply a political tool. There is no doubt that some if not all of the men responsible for its preparation, and many of those who support it, do so primarily for religious reasons. They realise the increasing departure of their people from the faith of their forefathers as they come into contact with modern materialistic and industrialised society, and, since their own religious faith is closely linked to patriotism in their hearts, they have naturally felt it should be linked in the educational system. The average Afrikaner, if one may indulge in such a generalisation, thinks far more with his heart than with his head, and herein has lain the cause of the wide appeal that this policy has made.

The opposition it has roused has roots in a number of reasons. To cite but a few: the policy provides a dangerous tool to those who would seek to use God to the glory of South Africa, however much it may originally have been motivated by a sincere wish to see South Africa used to the glory of God; this danger is inherent in any policy which claims for the interests of one section a sanction which is divine. If put into general effect the policy would drive a wedge between English and Afrikaans children, not only by educating them separately, but by educating the one group in a spirit of racial exclusiveness through the doctrine of the right of the Boer nation to dominate South Africa; thus would the differences between the two white races be perpetuated and the growth of a united white South Africa prevented. It would turn Afrikaans state schools into denominational schools under the direction of the Dutch Reformed Church. It would stultify educational progress by introducing an educationally regressive system through the insistence of the subordination of all subjects to a narrowly fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible. In short, it would put the clock back at a time when South Africa must either hasten along the paths of enlightenment and progress or be

overtaken by forces of grave disruption.

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REVIEW

HENRI LASSERRE

A CONSCIOUS humility ought to characterize any critical discussion of utopian communities, whether past or present. It is not of such great importance that most of these idealistic undertakings have been failures. Their real significance lies in the motives which brought them into being and the willingness of the participants to exchange personal security for group security—to *dare*, that is, to risk their economic future in a type of humanitarian venture which makes the welfare of the individual dependent upon the welfare of the group.

There are numerous books concerned with the fortunes of religious and socialistic communities. Charles Nordhoff's *Communitic Societies of the United States*, published by John Murray in London in 1875, is one of the most thorough. A more recent volume is V. F. Calverton's *Where Angels Dared to Tread* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1941), *A Southwestern Utopia* by Thomas A. Robertson, telling the story of the Topolobampo Colony on the West Coast of Mexico, late in the last century, has been noticed in these pages. Whatever else one may conclude from such reading, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that genuine heroism—the complete giving of oneself to an ideal—has played a part in nearly every one of these ventures. And in the history of each, there was some moment or interlude of extraordinary realization, when the whole-hearted practice of human brotherhood became a fact instead of a utopian dream.

It is true that an incredible naïvete as well as incredible enthusiasm frequently pervades community projects. Many harsh things can be said of the failures of communities. And yet, the urge to create a new form of society seems irrepressible in a small number of people in every generation. Here is a fact, and by any fair standard of judgment, it must be called an admirable fact—one worth examining. And it would seem of the greatest importance to resist the impulse to speak sagely of the follies and impracticabilities that are so easily discovered in the

histories of communities, and, instead, to search out the meaning of this deeply rooted human impulse to start building a better human society *without delay*.

For this purpose, Watson Thomson's study of Henri Lasserre, *Pioneer in Community*, just published by the Ryerson Press, Toronto, Canada (\$2.00), should be a useful volume. Lasserre, who died in 1945, gave his life and his not inconsiderable fortune to the ideal of the cooperative community. Born in Switzerland in the 1880's, Lasserre early became committed to cooperative principles. Trained as a lawyer to enter the firm to which his father had belonged, his interest in social justice led him to specialize in the legal problems of cooperatives. He became persuaded of the moral contentions of European socialists, but remained in the socialist party only a short time—he had no sympathy for the "maneuvers" of political action. In 1909, he began moving toward the view that inherited wealth ought to be devoted to social justice, and two years later he helped to establish a foundation called *Terre Libre*, the resources of which were to be used to assist cooperative community projects. A portion of the 65,000 francs given by Lasserre to the foundation was devoted to assisting the *Liéfra* colony founded by Paul Passy. Years later, Lasserre himself started another colony, the *Société de Cooperation Intégrale*, at Peney, near Geneva. Some twenty people participated in this agricultural project, which lasted only eighteen months. The Peney cooperative community, begun in 1919, was to have been, as Thomson puts it, "the answer to the war's disillusionment"—"the solution of both the material problem of security and the deeper, moral problem of brotherhood." However, with the coming of the war's end, the re-opening of the French-Swiss frontier caused the Geneva markets to be flooded with vegetables from France at prices which brought great losses to the Peney colonists, who were working with both poor soil and high production costs. Lasserre leased the colony's holdings to Swiss farmers and left Peney.

These are the "cold facts" of the Peney community. Yet the intangible reality behind the facts ought to be recorded, also. Eight years after, one of the participants in the adventure wrote to

Lasserre:

You know that so far from having ever regretted taking part in the Peney experiment, I have always felt privileged to have shared in it, for it opened my eyes to new and unimagined horizons. Perhaps life would have gradually taught me what I learnt there, but it could not have given me the feeling of having shared with you the experience of a quite new form of living, living not exclusively based on the satisfaction of selfish and material needs. Perhaps it is magnificent folly to believe in the possibility of such an organization. It does not much matter: the ideal is there, and the memory of it. I do not know what has become of our former comrades: you are the only one to whom I can still speak of the splendid recollection I hold of some of our hours together there. At moments I almost think that we but very narrowly missed the mark, and that we only needed for success some collaborators animated by your faith. For, the more I think of it, the solution of every problem of this kind is of a moral rather than of an economic order.

Lasserre never lost that faith. In 1921, he came to Canada with his young son, Frederic, then nine years old. The father was nearly fifty. He picked fruit and taught figure skating for a living. Finally, as a cellist, he joined the staff of a music conservatory, and in 1924 he became a lecturer in French at the University of Toronto. Of the lean days before Lasserre became a university professor, Thomson writes: "None of his associates of this period was aware at the time (and few have become aware to this day) that this boyish-mannered, courteous new-comer with the European accent could have been living quite comfortably on unearned income, but for the obstacle of his own ethical principles."

In Canada, Lasserre soon interested himself in the community undertakings of North America, and entered into correspondence with communities in other parts of the world. The Llano Colony, founded by the socialist, Job Harriman, in California, especially excited his interest. (Harriman, it will be remembered, was socialist candidate for the mayor of Los Angeles in 1912, and would probably have been elected save for the discrediting of labor by the confession of the McNamara brothers to having bombed the building of the Los Angeles *Times*.)

The colony began in California in 1914, but moved to better land in Louisiana in 1917. When Lasserre visited Llano in 1926, the membership was 188 persons. He was deeply stimulated by the experience but found certain objections to the structure of the colony, which he called "a rather queer combination of capitalism, communism, and philanthropy." Llano had outside stockholders, while at the same time all the members were supposed to share equally in goods and privileges, regardless of individual contributions. Lasserre's comments are sagacious:

I do not think that those in the prime of life, or at least those of the right type and the right spirit, normally gifted, could be happy with such a lack of individual freedom as is implied in communism, and develop as high a type of men as even the present social system has been able to develop from time to time, in spite of its defects. This is why I do not believe humanity is ready for communism, while it is certainly ready for cooperatism.

His searching criticisms were offered to the manager of the Llano colony, in the most friendly spirit, but met with little understanding. Disputes and difficulties over the affairs of the Colony finally led to its dissolution in 1936.

Lasserre's correspondence with Eberhard Arnold, the leader of the Cotswold Bruderhof in England, is of similar interest. (With the coming of war in 1939, nearly all the members of the Cotswold Bruderhof migrated to Paraguay, where they are known as the Sociedad Fraternal Hutteriana.) Lasserre had deep critical intelligence as well as a constructive spirit and he endeavored to suggest to Arnold that the totalitarian mood of the Christianity advocated by the Bruderhof was hardly calculated to win support for the community.

When addressing [he wrote Arnold] the outside public, therefore, should the Bruderhof not let people form their judgment about this community from its principles its actual way of living, and its practical achievements rather than from a religious doctrine to be accepted from the outset?

In another letter, Lasserre puts his finger on the forbidding aspect of the Bruderhof spirit. He wrote to Arnold:

You said: "In its fullest sense of being something whole, or complete, or all-embracing, we are 'totalitarian.' In other words, we believe *God* is 'totalitarian' because he demands the *whole* man."

With the latter part of this quotation I agree fully. But is it a reason, because *God* demands the whole man, also for *Community* to demand the whole man, as is implied in the former part of the quotation, and as seems to be asserted repeatedly in the literature emanating from the Bruderhof? . . . are there not certain phases of the individual's life, which can only be related to *God* *directly* and for which the greatest possible freedom should be afforded by the community to the individual?

Lasserre pursued this argument by pointing to the authoritarian rule of the province of Quebec by the Catholic Church, which, he said, "denies its members opportunities for some personal, individual life and thought outside the framework of that society itself." It is evident that Lasserre was one of those rare individuals who understood the need for a just balance between freedom and authority, and who recognized that an ideal community—or society—must be an evolution, not a ready-made affair, although he thought that this evolution might be assisted through the application of the principles of cooperation. Integral Cooperation was his term for the application of cooperative principles to the whole of community life.

Lasserre is perhaps most acute in his analysis of the institutional defects of capitalist society. He found the chief source of injustice in the ownership of land and the means of production by those who neither farm nor manufacture. In an essay, *The Conscience of the Rich*, he wrote:

The one ethical justification for private ownership is to be found in the right of every man to the reward—the full reward—of his labour. This reward he may use at once in purchasing things he needs or desires; or he may postpone its actual use until a later date if he wishes to do so, in other words he may save, provided of course his savings may not be used for exploiting other men's labor. He may convert this reward, either into consumable goods or services which he requires, or into the lands or tools which he may utilize himself if he happens to be an independent worker. This is the scope of the right, the "sacred" right of private property, a right which belongs—or should belong—to every man; and it

must be observed that this right can only belong to every man when each individual is enabled to have access to the means of production that he needs in order to work.

Lasserre himself, in company with a few other Christian Socialists, had "restored" the property which was his by inheritance, and not by labor, to the social community, and he proposed this "renunciation" to others as the ethical step to take.

It is easy to say that Henri Lasserre "oversimplified" the moral and economic problems of our time. But it would be most difficult to prove that a world in which men of his spirit prevailed would not be a world without either economic or moral problems. Perhaps it should be added that after becoming established in the New World, Lasserre arranged for the transfer of the funds of the *Terre Libre* foundation to a similar organization in Canada, which he called the Robert Owen Foundation, and that this fund still exists for the benefit of cooperative undertakings of the sort that Lasserre had at heart.

Possibly, from so brief a review, the impression may be gained that Lasserre was chiefly an acute if benevolent fault-finder with existing communities, and not much of a cooperator, himself. We suggest a reading of Mr. Thomson's book as an antidote to this impression, should it exist. Lasserre's life was one of the most generous in cooperation—from beginning to end, a career in practical brotherhood which has left enduring inspiration in the hearts of hundreds who are following his example.

COMMENTARY **SUCCESS STORY**

REFLECTING on the conspiracy of circumstances which ended the "cooperative" life of the Columbia Conserve Company, an Indianapolis canning concern—its history is given in detail in Watson Thomson's biography of Henri Lasserre—we found consolation in the fact that the life of the "average private enterprise in the United States is about three years. The Columbia Conserve Company, on the other hand, enjoyed successful operation as a cooperative for nearly two decades. It was not only cooperative in form of organization, but the employees, also communally the owners, paid themselves according to individual *needs* rather than on the basis of efficiency or earning power. One of the original owners, William P. Hapgood, has described the unusual progress of the company under worker-management, which brought the profits to 30 per cent of the capital stock in 1929. The transfer of stock had begun in 1925, and by 1931, 51 per cent was owned by the employees.

Ironically, the cooperative phase of the Company was eliminated by some well-intentioned labor legislation, applied by the Department of Labor without regard to the annual wage plan that had been worked out by the cooperative, leading finally in 1949 to a court order requiring that the common stock, 61 per cent of which was then collectively owned, be distributed among the individual workers. This, in Hapgood's words, "was the final destruction of the efforts of the Columbia Conserve Company to do many things in industry which have seldom, if ever, been attempted before."

The moral seems to be that institutional pioneering, in our excessively organized society, is the most difficult pioneering of all. Such attempts face not only the usual hazards of doing business, but also their own inability to fit in with the aggressive mechanisms, legislative and otherwise, put into operation to serve the separate purposes

of both labor and capital. A group which tries to *unite* the interests of both capital and labor must survive in a social and economic no-man's-land between the opposing forces of the class struggle. Its motives have little in common with either side.

Yet, for many years, the Columbia Conserve Company was a dramatic success. How many such efforts would it take to transform the labor and economic legislation of the country into supports, instead of obstacles, to cooperative enterprise?

CHILDREN and Ourselves

One problem which arises within the periphery of parental responsibility is that of discovering the best method of enabling the child to get the most benefit out of his activities. The natural tendency of children seems to be to cram as many activities as possible within any given space of time—jumping from one thing to another and rushing about, expending a tremendous amount of energy. Children become very impatient with parents who suggest that perhaps doing fewer things more thoroughly will enable them to get much more value out of what they do. As almost feverish rushing seems to be a very widespread tendency in youth, can we say that it is normal, and that young people must be constantly "on the move" in order to feel that they are really experiencing life? It does seem that in dashing from one activity to another, very little value can be derived.

THE questioner assumes that most children and adolescents usually and easily acquire the habit of going through experience superficially. Since this is a prevalent habit, we must infer that it is in large part conditioned by the parental and general social environment. Ours is certainly a civilization of "dashing from one activity to another."

The solution obviously cannot be found by lecturing the child on the inadvisability of too-rapid motion and incomplete attention given while in motion to what is being done. The only way of securing an improvement is by accompanying the child, mentally and emotionally, in a thorough mastery of *one* area of experience. Any ability, once fully developed, becomes an ever present reason for not undertaking anything unless it is carried through to the limit of one's capacity.

This, we might say, is self-evident, purely from a basis of empirical psychology. But perhaps it is also in order to look at some of the implications of the general "philosophies of life" which are expressed by feverish, discordant activity, in comparison with more persistent endeavors which call forth a great deal of self-discipline. Presently we are part of a civilization

which makes sure that we never neglect the experience of "acquiring things." But the same culture gives us very little encouragement to focus our attention primarily upon self-control.

Persistency depends on the idea of self-improvement. Here, however, we encounter another complicating factor, for it is clear that self-improvement may be undertaken for either one of two entirely different reasons. Some men, including most of those who may be called fanatics, seek "improvement" in order to surpass their fellows in a sufficient number of abilities to enable mastery over "weaker" or "inferior" persons. Self-improvement directed at the attainment of power is, therefore, socially dangerous. But from the standpoint of the person seeking it, power-attainment can also have a very deleterious effect. Whenever we "seek power," we seek it with some focus in our imagination depicting the degree or amount of power which is our goal. If we reach this goal, or an approximation of it, we no longer have the spur to self-improvement. And in such instances, we suspect, the personality, which until that point at least has been generating *some* force of creativity, even though in an immoral direction, then begins to disintegrate.

Many parents feel they have solved the problem posed by the questioner when they win their child's concentration on the mastery of a certain task by promising substantial rewards. The girl or boy who manages a perfect rendition of a difficult piano piece because the gift of a bicycle has been promised him is learning one kind of discipline, but it is not the sort of discipline which can be thoroughly recommended. No exercise of concentration in the attainment of a single goal will sustain itself if only the tangible reward is considered important.

All such parental devices give entirely illusory perspectives on the moral progress of the child. The psychology is similar to that of millions of young persons who have striven vigorously to attain an impressive and advantageous marriage,

as chiefly representing a competitive step upward in relation to the rest of society. When such a goal is reached, the personality often falls to pieces, for such a personality is purely artificial.

A well-meaning advertisement for the public library now being displayed in Los Angeles attempts to "sell" the idea of improving the literacy of children. The advertisement tells us: "The child who reads, leads." What is the emphasis here? Clearly upon "leading," and not on *reading* at all. If this were the only reason for reading given our children, we could expect, in turn, one result—that if any easier way were found for "leading," it would logically be adopted. Reading, education, the acquisition of wisdom, are secondary.

However vague and mystical is the position outlined by Socrates and Plato, we must learn, and we must help our children to learn, that virtue and soul-growth are one and the same thing, and that nothing else in life matters. This is the perspective needed by the child engaged in the "feverish" rushing described.

Just for the sake of caution, one other thing needs to be borne in mind. Some children have so great a potential of will power and concentration that it is actually difficult for them to exercise their abilities fully unless they do undertake a great many things at once. Some college students prove this point by receiving considerably better grades while taking a heavy schedule than when they take a light one. While this is the exception and not the rule, it is a factor which should be considered, and might serve as one of the many reminders we need for the fact that it is not the number of things a child or an adolescent does which is important, nor the rapidity with which he does them, but the *underlying attitude* and *degree of purposeful alertness* which accompanies the activity. If the child is inwardly calm and is enthusiastically learning in the midst of complicated doings, we do not need to worry. But if his activity is spasmodic, directed only towards the attainment of a specific goal which strikes his temporary

fancy, we face the probability that our child is animated by the more dangerous variety of motivation.

FRONTIERS

Telepathy and Evolution

REPORTERS, apparently, found the recent declaration for telepathy of Prof. A. G. Hardy, Oxford zoologist, more exciting than did his scientific colleagues, who seemed unperturbed by this heresy. Even his suggestion of a link between telepathy and evolution failed to evoke strenuous objection from the specialists among the members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, before whom he spoke, so that the lay bystander may conclude that scientific thinking about evolution has reached some sort of doldrums and will now welcome any idea calculated to stir up a breeze.

What Prof. Hardy really declared for was the idea that thought may have tangible effects on the processes of evolution. Perhaps "thought" is the wrong word, for his proposal deals rather with what might be called the need for organic change that is *felt* by a species. In any event, his theory is a kind of psychological Lamarckism, and may in time bring justification to those students of biology who have found themselves unable to relinquish a fondness for the doctrines of the old French soldier.

Lamarck had much more to do with the popularization of the idea of evolution than is commonly realized, today. His major contribution was contained in *Philosophie Zoologique*, published in 1809, the year of Darwin's birth, in which he assembled a vast amount of evidence to show the great variety of gradations between different forms of life, illustrating the difficulty of marking off one species from another. However, when it came to demonstrating that one species might be *derived* from another, or how it "evolved," Lamarck earned himself almost immortal ridicule by insisting that the use and disuse of organs led to the transformation of species—in his famous illustration, the giraffe gained a long neck by reaching for the succulent leaves on the tops of trees, which "acquired

characteristic" was thereupon transmitted by heredity. This is the doctrine of "the inheritance of acquired characteristics," now generally denied in the conclusions of subsequent research.

The theoretical rejection of Lamarck's teachings is founded on the distinction made by August Weismann (1834-1914) between germ-cells and somatic-cells. Germ cells, which have to do with reproduction, are in *most* cases passed on intact from one generation to another, the "acquired characteristics" affecting only the somatic or body cells. The exceptions to this rule are known as mutations, formerly called "sports" of nature, and while it has been possible to induce mutations artificially by means of X-rays, the actual cause of mutations as supposedly the basic mechanism of evolution remains unknown. Nearly all the artificially induced mutations are "lethal"—that is, they do not lead to the improvement of the species, but in the direction of extinction. A recent illustration of this is available in the widely discussed effect of the radiations of the atom bomb on the germ cells of persons in the proximity of the blast. Theories of the cause of mutations now range all the way from the influence of the mind of God to the effect of cosmic rays, as proposed by Dr. Oliver L. Reiser some years ago.

Darwin, someone has said, explained what happened to the species after they arrived, but did not increase our understanding of how they arrived. While Prof. Hardy's psychological Lamarckism will be no major help in this problem, it at least makes the idea of the inheritance of acquired characteristics less mechanical and less subject to the objections of biologists. Maybe a psychic factor does have to be present in order for an evolutionary modification to be communicated to the plasm of the germ, and thus to enter the hereditary line.

A suggestion of this sort is found in the writings of Samuel Butler, a literary figure of the nineteenth century, whose scientific speculations, like Lamarck's labors, have not been sufficiently

appreciated. Prof. Hardy mentions Samuel Butler, so that he may have been influenced to recognize the extraordinary implications of telepathy for evolution by the writings of this most original thinker. In *Life and Habit* (London, 1877), Butler unearthed, not through experiment, but by a careful reading of Charles Darwin's *Variations of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, a kind of fact which seems to give remarkable support to Prof. Hardy's theory. In this volume Darwin had recorded the results of a series of experiments performed with guinea pigs by the French scientist, Brown-Sequard. The latter found that toeless guinea pigs were invariably born from parents which had gnawed off their own toes owing to the sciatic nerve having been divided. The point, of course, is that the intense *psychic* experience of the parents somehow affected the formation of the offspring. Nothing is said about the next generation of guinea pigs, but there being no particular evolutionary advantage in toelessness, it is reasonable to expect that this "mutation" would not be perpetuated.

Another line of speculation in accord with psychological Lamarckism would involve the marking of children by the imagination of the mother. This is a favorite topic of books devoted to debunking "superstitions," and yet, despite the contempt of scientists, evidence continues to appear that this phenomenon may take place. Animals carrying young, as well as human beings, when subjected to some startling or terrifying experience, have been known to give birth to monsters. A pleasanter aspect of this subject is found in the custom of ancient Greek mothers frequenting temples where beautiful statues might be seen, so that their children would be born with similar beauty.

Demonstrations of "mind over matter" are not limited to the phenomena of birth. So staid an authority as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* reports at length on the marks of the stigmata—replicas of the wounds said to have been inflicted on Christ by the crown of thorns, the nails, and the spear of

the Roman soldier—which appear on the bodies of moody religious persons given to abnormal brooding on the sufferings of their Lord. A secular version of the stigmata has been known to occur in the case of a nineteenth-century medium who was able to make legible red letters appear on the skin of his forearm (see A. Conan Doyle's *History of Spiritualism* II, 31).

Ritchie Calder, discussing the proposal of telepathy as a factor in evolution, remarks in the *New Statesman and Nation* that on another occasion Prof. Hardy compared startling scientific hypotheses to the regions which ancient map-makers used to identify on their charts with the words: "Here are dragons." When the implications of Prof. Hardy's present suggestion are pursued, it becomes evident that there are dragons behind every one of them. Yet the scientists of the British Association who listened to this proposal were not alarmed. Perhaps they think it is time that evolutionary theorizing embraced a dragon or two.