VOLUME II, NO. 47
NOVEMBER 23, 1949

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK?

THE people who write and speak about what is going on in the world are few; those who don't, many. This vast, voiceless core of humanity, sometimes called the Masses, often symbolized by the phrase, the Common Man, needs an interpreter who will neither sneer nor preach, who is himself uncommon and yet not separate from the rest.

Before the first World War, it was not too difficult to guess what the great majority were thinking about, most of the time. Mr. Wells was not then writing a book called *Mind at the End of its Tether,* but was devoting himself to utopian programs. No mood of desperation was in the air. Nor was there so great a separation between the so-called "intellectual" classes and the rest of the people as exists today. Each man had his own version of upward-and-onward philosophy. The gentlemanly virtues counted for something and Dashiell Hammett could have sold no stories, or very few, to the great reading public of 1910. The impersonal cruelties and the overt brutalities of our own time, toward which we grow as indifferent as the spectator at a Roman circus, would not have been tolerated in those days—at least, exposure to them would have seared and mutilated human sensibility almost to the breaking point. Men had, in brief, a faith in themselves and in their future. It was an ill-founded faith, perhaps, as later events proved, but it served its time as fears and doubts and forebodings cannot serve the present.

No one knows what the common man thinks, today. That is to say, it is difficult to generalize about the common man except in terms of his frustrations and insecurities. Franz Alexander, describing the contemporary psychiatric diagnosis of the common man in *United Nations World* for November, speaks of powerful emotional needs which "manifest themselves on a large scale by an increased desire for strong, centralized government, by lack of courage and self-reliance, by the decline of the adventurous spirit." These desires, of course, cannot be called "thinking." They are the opposite of thinking, or rather, they are the means by which thinking is paralyzed. No man can really think when he is afraid, unable to rely on himself, without daring, and wanting some strong, central authority to protect him and tell him what to do. It is reasonable to assume that the actual thinking being done by the mass of human beings, today, is in terms of vague wonderings and unexpressed hopes. In the secrecy of their thoughts, they are casting about for something to believe in—looking for a "line" that gives some promise of continuing into the future, that will not suddenly break off and leave them suspended in time and space. Supposing that this suggestion is close enough to the fact to be worth developing, it becomes evident that the intellectuals—those who do write and speak about what is going on in the world—are giving the common man practically no help at all in his problems. The common man is wondering about basic questions, while the intellectual is busy with secondary or negative considerations. The intellectual does not think *with* the common man, but *at* him. Generally speaking, the intellectual regards the common man as a member of "the dumb public" that will not listen to what the intellectual has to say.

Take for example Bertrand Russell, who, everyone will agree, is a prime example of a modern intellectual. He has certainly done a great deal of thinking and writing about what is going on in the world. Also writing in *UN World* for November, Mr. Russell offers a blueprint for creating international unity through the agency of some sort of political union of the Western Powers. The problem, as he states it, is to

develop in people a sense of loyalty toward the supra-national organization that is stronger than their allegiance to the individual nations of their birth. Accordingly, he proposes that the union of States have a President who will stand as a *symbol* of unity. He writes:

> The unity of a nation is symbolized by a King or a President, and a supra-national union, if it is to make an equally strong appeal, must also be symbolized by a person. In modern times such a person cannot be a King or Emperor, but must be an elected President. There are, however, two dangers. One is that the President might become a Fuhrer; the other is that there might be jealousies and contests between the nations as to which of them the President should come from. To obviate the first of these dangers, I should give to the President only such functions as belong to our King. To obviate the second, I should decree that he must come from a country with a small population. Given these conditions, I think the President should be chosen for life, prayed for in Church, and saluted with a salute of more than twenty-one guns.

An exceedingly clever man, Mr. Russell; he understands human nature *so* well. Does he?

For a man who is supposed to be interested in doing something for world peace, Mr. Russell seems to us to understand human nature very little. First of all, he is saying, between the lines, that of course *he* wouldn't need to go to church and pray for the President in order to feel loyal to a supra-national organization, and the battleships, for all he cares, could save their gun-powder for more functional explosions. As one of the more candid atheists of our time, Mr. Russell has no personal use for churches, having frequently been in hot water for one or another reason with the advocates of orthodox religion.

Now the common man, if he were told that Mr. Russell has such pleasant little hypocrisies in store for the dumb public, would certainly feel no particular gratitude for this planner of a world order. The more acute members of the dumb public might even point out that praying for the President as a national observance and the devising of other pageantries to enlist the emotional support of the masses have a suspicious resemblance to the *parteitag* doings of the Nazis under Hitler—the only difference in principle being that at least some of the Nazis really believed in their pageantry, while Mr. Russell obviously does not believe in his.

Of course, Mr. Russell need have no worries. He is not writing for the masses, but for those select readers who are trying to figure out what to tell the masses to do—how to "manage" them for their own good. Mr. Russell belongs to a different union from the one the masses belong to and his remarks are made in a closed meeting. They won't get around.

What, really, is wrong with what Mr. Russell says? It has to be admitted that some people are better informed and more intelligent than others, and that there is good sense in getting together and talking things over. That is the worthy purpose for which a magazine like UN *World* is published. And it seems reasonable, further, that certain matters of state may appropriately be held secret for a time, to avoid misunderstandings in specific instances. But Mr. Russell is not talking about this sort of confidential knowledge of men in authority. He means that the people must be helped to feel loyalty to their authority by symbols with which he is himself completely disillusioned. Taking the public into his confidence will await, not the growth of the people to wisdom, but their disenchantment. Their faith must grow, not greater, but less, before they will be fit to join with the Better Minds who have charge of public affairs. This, we submit, is a Machiavellian view of human nature, essentially contemptuous of the great mass of human kind. It may be short-term "realism," but it leads to long-term nihilism.

Human development into the capacities for self-government ought not to mean an awakening to cynical manipulation of popular superstition, but a deepening perception of the subtleties of human relationships and a more fundamental faith in the potentialities of men to do good and to trust one another.

The common man will never understand what Mr. Russell is talking about because Mr. Russell is not interested in reaching the common man. Other intellectuals fail for other reasons. There are, perhaps, three other approaches to what is going on in the world. First, there is the Complicated Program, capable of being understood only by the inventors of other Complicated Programs. How much do *you* remember of Ely Culbertson's plan for the reorganization of the world ? Or Clarence Streit's *Union Now?* Or would you prefer to speak for five minutes on Walter Lippmann's theory of the Balance of Power? These people simply take in each other's wash. This is not to suggest that a time will not come when plans of this sort—this complicated, we mean—will have to be devised and put into effect, but to insist that for the average man, for ourselves and most of our readers, such plans have only the remotest sort of reality. And this is not, we maintain, because we are all stupid people. It is because such plans, however excellent, are not really important, here and now.

The second approach sets forth the dreadful facts of Immeasurable Danger. The November issue of *UN World,* conveniently at hand, is the best possible example of the Immeasurable-Danger approach, for it is almost entirely devoted to a symposium on the atom bomb. The editors, apparently, wrote to a number of experts and asked them, What does the atom bomb mean to *you*? They tell us, of course. They tell us how we are going to be blown to bits, or why we probably won't be wiped out right away—the experts don't agree very well—and go on and on, weighing this possibility against that one, quoting this scientist and that military authority. They make the *UN World* sound like a trade journal operating in the field of mass destruction—it's all so measured, so "rational" in spirit.

The October *Partisan Review* has a literary review by Ernst Juenger in which he discusses a book by the Marquis de Sade. Juenger remarks:

> The book makes uncomfortable reading, not so much because of the horrors it contains, but because of the complete self-assurance with which it violates the unexpressed compact existing among all men. It is as if someone were to raise his voice in a room and say: "Now just among us beasts—"

The way the specialists of war and national defense talk about the atom bomb and some of the newer methods of destruction has something of this quality.

The common man, although he may "react" to talk of this sort, will hardly be helped to think as a human being ought to think. He is more likely to grow completely benumbed by these horrible speculations. They are certainly over his head, which is far better than having them *in* his head. Incidentally, *UN World* reports that the people in Turkey and in similar small countries are now quite light-hearted since the announcement that Russia, too, has an atom bomb. They know that whatever happens, they will not be able to do anything about it, so far as war is concerned, and they find this idea a great relief.

The third approach is the resort to Ethical Generality. This has the most hope of affecting the common man, because he can *understand* ethical appeals. The difficulty is that they are weak. The ethical issues in world affairs have no direct connection with the affairs that the common man can do something about, himself. Further, ethical arguments, today, amount to no more than provocative references to a number of commonly accepted sentiments. Ethics, to command, must be founded on some urgent conviction of the reality of moral law, and not upon mere sentiments. And the idea of the moral law must present something more than a vague intuition.

It should be evident from history that ethical ideas have little effect in human conduct unless they are related to some basic theory of cause and effect. The world has never been without ethical ideas, but they lend their power to the movement of history only when connected with some widely accepted doctrine about the crucial processes of

human life. A religion which teaches immortality as the result of ethical behavior, and which is intellectually believable, exerts a profound ethical influence. In the nineteenth century, a number of forceful minds felt that they had discovered the embodiment of ethical principles in economic relationships. Through the power of their ideas, they were able to change many aspects of human life. Their ideas may not have been altogether what we now believe, nor the effects of what they wrote and taught to our liking, but the fact remains that, by linking ethics and economics, they changed the world.

The ethical ideal of economic reformers and revolutions was a simple one. It had to do with the wider distribution of material goods and the general prosperity of the common man. But somewhere, the ethical factor in economic reforms got lost, perhaps because the relation between the two was not as fundamental as the reformers believed. Today, ethics is being associated with a non-material discipline—the various activities which come under the general heading of psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychology. But, unlike the economic reformers who, in the early days at least, attempted to identify themselves with the common man, the psychiatrists, because of their scientific background and their habit of regarding man as an object rather than a subject, are constrained to talk *about* the common man, or *at* him—never with and for him. The result is that psychiatry, thus far, is ethically sterile, although much of what the psychiatrists reveal has great critical importance for the modern world, and for the common men who make it up.

So, the quest for a communicable ethics that is related to our everyday lives, and which will grow naturally to include the larger social relationships of nation and race, is still before us as something that we have not even begun to undertake. The present seems to be an interim period—a time when the intellectuals still have opportunity to recognize that the real issues in their own lives are not different from the issues in the lives of the common man, and that their skill in using words may be the source of the greatest delusion they will have to overcome before they get down to business.

Letter from

JAPAN

TOKYO.—No people enjoy being occupied by a foreign nation. And the Japanese are no different from other peoples in their desire to regain their independence. But the Japanese are not an ungrateful people and they would be the first to express their gratitude for all the material benefits they have been receiving from the occupying powers for the reconstruction- of Japan's war-shattered economy. It is an open question, to be sure, whether or not the Japanese if left to their own devices would have been able to reach their present state of recovery. But it is a fact that industrial production has risen to about 75 per cent of the prewar level. Living conditions, on the whole, have also shown tremendous improvement as compared to the dark days immediately following the Surrender.

On the other hand, the Occupation is having its depressing effects upon the people. Although steps are being taken to ease Occupation controls and to turn back the civil administration to the Japanese, a great deal of direction by Occupation personnel of the minutest details still exists. The Japanese feel in a sense that the Occupation is taking away initiative and is building up a feeling of dependence and lack of confidence, especially among the nation's youth. They thus hanker for an opportunity to survive or perish on their own.

But aside from its effects upon the Japanese themselves, there should be some serious thinking among the Occupation personnel of the effects of an occupation upon those placed in the role of occupying a foreign nation. There is a real danger that a long Occupation may result in the Occupation Forces believing themselves to be the master race. The Japanese have been quick to sense the contempt with which many of the Occupation personnel deal with the indigenous population. To take a mundane example, they see the utter disregard of traffic signals with the Japanese police too frightened to protest. They see children of the Occupation personnel vilifying the Japanese they come in contact with. They see all too many instances of degrading segregation.

Even under the best of occupations, the occupier, whether consciously or not, assumes the role of the master and the occupied that of the subservient. This is deemed inevitable. But it is nonetheless unfortunate It wears thin the ideals of freedom and liberty the Japanese are being taught to respect as the bastions of democracy. The Japanese are finding that there is a democracy exclusively for the Occupation personnel, and another democracy for the Japanese. To be sure, a recent directive from the Supreme Commander is permitting limited fraternization between the Occupation and the Japanese But the master race complex cannot be eliminated by regulations alone. It should be stressed, of course, that there are a great number of persons in the Occupation who are fighting for decency in human relationships.

The wartime occupation of Asiatic nations by the Japanese during the late war, of course, saw the Japanese occupiers consider themselves the chosen people of the world and wherever they went they treated the indigenous population with contempt and abuse. But the Japanese militarists had made it clear that they were the master race; they undertook their bloody conquest with no high mission of giving liberty and freedom to the people they vanquished. On the other hand, one of the avowed aims of the Allied Powers in the past war was the elimination of the superman complex of the Nazis and the Japanese militarists. The actions of some of the Occupation personnel thus come as a distinct shock and surprise to many Japanese. The thinking Japanese, who genuinely deplored this master-race complex among their own nationals during the period of Japanese military expansion, sincerely hope that an early end will be placed on its newest manifestations among the occupiers.

The complete withdrawal of the Occupation Force is furthermost from the desires of the Japanese, who are fearful of its international and internal after-effects. And as long as the two great ideologies of Russia and America are locked in mortal conflict, that fear will persist. But the fact remains that history has never known of a single instance in which the relationship between the conquerors and the conquered could be considered normal and ideal. It is another telling commentary that war and conquest bring evils to both the victors and the vanquished.

JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

NOVELS FROM OTHER LANDS

As Lafcadio Hearn pointed out many years ago, literature is perhaps the most important single means to the mutual understanding of peoples separated by distance, seas, and by the more formidable barriers of misconception and nationalist tradition. The man with no knowledge at all of world literature is vulnerable—potentially, at least—to the provincial egotisms of nation and race.

Why, one may ask, are not at least the English-language periodicals of other countries attractively displayed in our libraries? Why are not the books of other countries, in their own editions, given prominence in their own editions, given prominence in the interest of international good will?

The answer that must be given, without making too much of it, is that what the American public reads is largely determined by the profit motive, and the libraries, the more "modern" they become, are increasingly infected by the habitual techniques of "selling" the public their "service," with less and less thought given to the actual processes of adult education and the ideal of helping to create a cosmopolitan world.

Lately, through the happenstance of coming across a volume brought back from India by a traveler, we had opportunity to read a contemporary Indian novel, *So Many Hungers!* by Bhabani Bhattacharya, published by Hind Kitabs Limited, of Bombay. First of all, it inspired the vain wish that books of this sort could be made easily available to American readers. So much of the fabric and feeling of Indian life seems revealed in its pages. The story deals with the Bengal famine of 1943, as it affected the lives of a few individuals, against the background of mass starvation and unimaginable suffering and physical degradation. It is not, one ought to say, a "nice" book, for the reason that vivid description of the horrors of a terrible famine can never be nice, but the book attains something like a Dostoevskian impersonality from which niceness is hardly required. The foreground of the story deals with attitudes of mind—the psychological reactions of human beings who are variously involved in the tragic conditions produced by the famine. Some are its victims, some its profiteers. There is no attempt to convict a class, group or nation of responsibility for the famine. The human beings of India are presented in the same normal variety which is found in other parts of the world. There is extraordinary loyalty and extraordinary betrayal, there is serenity and tumult of heart. Consciences are exquisitely tortured by the perception of the meaning of events, and in other cases, insensitive persons are unable to suffer except on their own behalf.

One noticeable quality of *So Many Hungers!* may be remarked. In general, Indian literature has been extensively affected by English mannerisms of rhetoric and diction. There is nothing wrong, of course, with British influence in literature, but the taking on of mere mannerisms from some other culture can do no national literature any good. At the outset of *So Many Hungers!* one feels a certain superficiality which may be interpreted as this sort of influence, but as the story unfolds it becomes increasingly genuine—less a combination of Indian thought and English forms and more of a spontaneous flow of ideas. It is as though the drama in the writer's mind gradually asserts its own power and lay irresistible claim to original forms of expression. The book, in short, is alive with human reality.

Lately MANAS has received letters expressing regret that often the books discussed by this Department are unavailable for reading. This is a situation which we, too, deeply regret. One subscriber, now living in Italy, has suggested that MANAS operate some sort of parcel post library to make these volumes accessible to those who want them. It might be said that were the finances plentiful and the helping hand present,

something like this could be done. The publishers, however, have all they can handle in keeping the magazine going, financially as well as in other respects, and would be foolish to undertake more. Thus the problem remains. . . .

To get a copy of *So Many Hungers!* we can think of nothing to suggest except to write to the publishers in Bombay, sending the equivalent of Rupees 7-8 (seven rupees and eight annas)—in U.S. currency, perhaps, to avoid the bother of a foreign draft. (At present, this would amount to about $1.60.)

A contrasting volume, also concerned with the life of the people of another country, is *The Train* by Vera Panova (Knopf, 1949), a Stalin prize novel, for which the reward of the writer was 100,000 rubles, or about $20,000. Vera Panova is apparently one of those writers to whom conformity comes naturally, so that she is able to embody sincere convictions in this rather engrossing story of a Soviet hospital train during the recent war. The central figure of the tale is the political commissar, who has all the approved virtues of the devoted Communist Party Member, and is still a human being. This book is worth reading, if only out of curiosity, to gain an appreciation of the literary scope of the modern Soviet novelist. *The Train* will not support cynical criticism about the artist being subject to the Party Line. This artist obviously believes in the Party Line. The point is, we never hear from those who don't.

On the other side of the ledger, *The Train* is an honestly told story presenting a social ideal which is earnestly accepted by most of the characters. Even if the ideal itself has limitations, or is incomplete, human resolution to live up to it is nonetheless admirable. A society where such resolution arises spontaneously in individuals is a society with a future—where moral growth is possible.

LONG AGO—NOT FAR AWAY

CRITICAL remarks concerning a controversial New York *Times* editorial of some months ago—the clipping just reached us—would amount to a simple case of shutting the barn door after the horse is gone, were it not that so many horses of this sort are disappearing these days. The most noticeable losses are occurring to those who once felt they were fairly clear on the meaning of Civil Rights, as defined by the U. S. Constitution. Among these people are a number who are still thinking about the implications of the prosecution and conviction of Larry Gara, formerly a teacher of Bluffton College in Ohio, but now a number in a federal penitentiary cell.

Most pacifists and supporters of the American Civil Liberties Union know that Gara was sentenced to serve eighteen months in a Federal prison for telling a Bluffton student to follow the dictates of his conscience, even if it led him to refuse induction into the armed forces. Shortly after, the Rev. Donald Harrington, successor to John Haynes Holmes as pastor of the Community Church in New York City, declared in a sermon that he was as guilty as Gara of all the charges upon which Gara was convicted and should be sent to prison, also.

On Aug. 8, the New York *Times*, that always-right paternalist, undertook to instruct the public in the "real" issues involved in Harrington's challenge to the Government. The *Times* patiently explained that individual freedom of conscience needs to be restrained by law, else anyone could commit a murder and insist that the act was determined by the unimpeachable dictates of his soul. Dr. Harrington replied to the *Times* (Aug. 10), ably enough for those who accept conventional religion, yet I was so determined to establish the existence of God that he entirely missed a wonderful opportunity to argue his case on the more widely accepted grounds of the American political tradition.

There is a vast difference—a difference ignored by the *Times*—between a law which denies a man's right to murder his fellow and a law which *compels* him to participate in killing. This difference is accentuated by the implications of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. The Constitution seeks to guarantee to every citizen the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. At the outset, then, the American Republic was committed to the protection and conservation of human life. And the State was not committed with the same urgency to force its citizens to kill other human beings, even in defensive warfare. Instead, we may remember, the Declaration of Independence begins with the assertion that *"all* men are created free and equal."

All men, presumably, have the right to expect that serious attention be given to their claim to the continuance of their lives—even the men belonging to the armies of a hostile power. Any war, in other words, whatever the issues, must be entered into by the United States only with the greatest reluctance and with full realization that war, for any reason, batters at the principles on which this country is founded. In any event, it seems reasonable to argue that no legislative body of the United States government could pass a law declaring that it is *right* to take human life. The elected representatives of the people may decide that regrettable necessity makes the declaration of war unavoidable, but if these legislators are themselves embued with the philosophy that so obviously permeates the Bill of Rights, they can hardly agree that the taking of life is a good thing. In fact, the taking of human life under any circumstances may seem so dubious a matter that a refusal to take part in war might be regarded as a loyalty to the spirit of the Constitution at least equal to any other form of patriotic expression.

The fundamental philosophical assumptions of the American Constitution certainly give ground for believing that "conscientious objection" ought to be considered a natural part of the national life. The New York *Times*, however, maintains that the laws made by the national State are for the protection of "society," and in this case the protection of society seems to involve the persecution of individuals. We take the view—somewhat unorthodox, perhaps—that the State was not originally empowered to do anything except protect the rights of *individuals.* An army may be established by the majority, for the majority, and it may function according to the will of the people who brought it into being and who serve in it—but the heart of the society envisioned by the framers of the Constitution will beat only for the liberty, the freedom of conscience, and the *life* of all men who are created equal.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

> You say in your article of Oct. 26 "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." What attitude should a parent take with a child who puts a great deal of "purposeful alertness" into some sport, for instance, and puts very little alertness into school subjects?

WE have long avoided discussing adolescent participation in modern sports, for the reason that this problem seems one of the most difficult to evaluate. Modern sport is, of course, built upon what has been loosely called the "competitive instinct," and for this reason alone all sports are subject to question. Ethical theorists, whether they be religious or philosophical, claim that the competitive instinct ought to be replaced by some other drive, more cooperative in pattern.

The amount of time spent on sports in modern times, in contrast to the proportion of energy similarly expended in older cultures, can only be explained by reflection on the effects of the Industrial Revolution. City dwellers who gain their livelihood by a relatively non-muscular tending of machinery, or in office work, have few of the outlets for physical vitality which were available in a society with little or no machinery. But the psychological aspect of the question is perhaps more important than the physical, for the chief characteristic of sports in the twentieth century is the huge Cult of Onlookers. Increasingly, with every year, we produce "sportsmen" whose only claim to this title is the money which enables them to purchase a ticket and a blanket to keep their legs warm-in the winter. The violent partisanship associated with collegiate football has stretched out into the area of games played by professional players, and here we see that good gate receipts are assured by a sort of *second-hand* competitive instinct. The successes and failures of basketball, baseball, and football teams give some sort of vicarious satisfaction to spectators.

If we are going to criticize modern sport at all, it seems that we must begin here—on the principle that there is considerable danger in anything vicarious. We would also maintain that all Christian dogma insisting upon the vicarious Atonement for our Sins by Christ is a misreading of the *self-energizing* ethics of Jesus, and we list "spectator participation" in sports as a fair illustration of the dubious psychology involved. To habitually depend upon something outside the sphere of our own efforts for religious or emotional stimulation seems a step toward a schizophrenic state of mind. While we expect very young children to dream about identifying themselves with various heroes of their choice, it behooves adults, and even the adolescent, to set about the much more difficult business of actually *becoming* a hero. Otherwise the make-believe world persists with men who are, at the same time, subconsciously aware of their own inadequacies.

This may sound like an oblique approach to the desire of an adolescent who wishes to concentrate time and energy on football rather than upon his studies. But the point is that overbalanced spectator participation in sports creates a sort of psychic complex which enmeshes the child and distorts his values. Even Grammar School and High School sport is for glory and not for exercise, body-building, or self-discipline of one's emotions. One's opponents become obstacles on the road to success, not close friends in the brotherhood of sport because of common participation in an exhilarating and enjoyable game. The dog-eat-dog struggle of "free enterprise" Capitalism is inevitably mirrored in the psychology attending the sports whose popularity grew by leaps and bounds with each new step in the industrial concentration of population.

A recent issue of *Fellowship* contains an open letter from members of a "Character Research Association" in St. Louis. The members of the

group responsible for the letter, it is stated, "have a hypothesis that one of the most serious ills of our culture is the element of competitiveness, that this is partly fostered by the competitive play life in childhood, and, further, that it is possible to alter our culture with respect to the play life of children with a very great improvement in a degree of cooperativeness in our culture." This group has completed the preliminary draft of a Cooperative Play Manual, including, for example, a revised conception of baseball which eliminates opposing sides, pop bottles from the spectators, fist fights on the field, etc.

Without wishing to deprecate such efforts, it seems necessary to say that we are not convinced that this is all there is to the question. There may be in all sports something symbolic of the much more important struggle which takes place within each man's nature—the fight to become the sort of person he wishes to be. The profound philosophy of the East is successfully represented in the dramatic setting of a battlefield, and, in the *Mahabharata*, furious combat is associated with the struggle of will. Similarly, the Greeks blended a philosophy that was not devoid of ethical or social greatness with a love of the Olympic Games. Possibly the child of ours who feels he can learn some things from athletics which he cannot learn from his studies is not entirely deluded. The greatest human happiness must be associated with the capacity to generate Intensity, and a natural childhood occasion for the self-discipline which must *precede* intensity arises from the need to train the body to respond fully to the mind and the will.

To engage in competitive sports is not necessarily to desire to trample someone else under foot or flatter one's ego. It also may be a courageous giving of *the best that one has*, in the knowledge that Defeat may be the outcome. The *Mahabharata* also contains the admonition to "make gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee, and then prepare for battle."

The child who is encouraged to become conscious of the values he is seeking *in all activities undertaken* may make use of the institution of sports without allowing the exploiters of an emotional craze to make use of him. And, as a matter of fact, he has a much better chance for realizing the equal human qualities of his opponents than does the spectator. In any case, it seems foolish to us, at this time, to recommend that children be prevented from participation in competitive sports, while not at all foolish to suggest that we help them learn to think with sufficient clarity to keep such participation from becoming overbalanced. In an ideal society perhaps, no one would want to be a spectator of any sport unless he, himself, at other times, were a participant. Perhaps the best thing we could do for our athletic children is to stop being spectators of High School games unless we are willing to periodically drag our old bones around in some semblance of the sport, ourselves.

FRONTIERS

Science and Knowledge

IT is possible that future historians will look back on the scientific thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and say that it represented a determined but unsuccessful rejection of Platonic idealism. The Platonists have always maintained that a real world of permanent and indestructible essences lies behind the world of the senses. In other words, they declared for the fact of illusion in human experience and tried to propose the means for distinguishing between illusion and reality. The discovery of reality, the Platonists said, is the purpose of philosophy; and by philosophy they meant far more than the spinning of speculations—they meant the practice of strenuous intellectual and moral disciplines, having the object of reducing the influence of illusion in the psychological life of the individual, and of opening up regions and vistas of mystical perception which remain closed to the "natural" man.

There is not much talk of Platonic mysticism, today, but there is certainly a return to Platonic idealism in scientific philosophy. The revival of Platonic mysticism may not be far behind, for the two are closely allied by their common psychological foundation. Platonic idealism is clearly set forth by the late Max Planck, in an article appearing in *Science* for Sept. 30—"The Meaning and Limits of Exact Science." This article, which forms a chapter in Planck's scientific autobiography (published this fall), might be said to combine the lingering moral ardor of the Renaissance with the spirit of the new discoveries of modern physics. It represents a union of attitudes which may be discerned in the thought of other great physicists such as Albert Einstein and Erwin Schrodinger—the best, in short, of modern scientific philosophy.

Prof. Planck begins with the history of an illusion—the illusion called Monism. In the nineteenth century, Monism represented the peak of scientific philosophizing. It held that there is one reality, Matter, and that as science gains knowledge of the laws of matter, all mysteries will be dispelled. The Monists, obviously, felt obligated to define everything in terms of matter and its motions—and in a way that conformed with the then prevailing ideas of what "matter" is.

Monism, Planck tells us, had a far too pretentious objective, one that could not possibly be reached. For, he argues, what is Science, after all, but carefully reasoned and experimentally verified conclusions concerning various types of sense perception? We do not "see" the thing itself, the ideal object of scientific investigation, but only the appearance of the thing to our senses —or to those extensions of our senses, the instruments which the research worker uses. As theories change and as methods of investigation and experimentation are refined, the scientific definitions of things also change.

There is never any finality to scientific definitions arrived at in this way. Speaking psychologically, Science, taken as a whole, is like a child who has constantly to revise his ideas about the world he lives in. At first, the moon and an electric light bulb are the same to the child—both are simply lights. He learns, however, that he can reach the light bulb with his hand, but not the moon. As Planck puts it:

> The more the child matures, and the more complete his world picture becomes, the less frequently he finds reason to wonder. And when he has grown up, and his world picture has solidified and taken on a certain form, he accepts this picture as a matter of course and ceases to wonder. Is this because the adult has fully fathomed the correlations and the necessity of the structure of his world picture? Nothing could be more erroneous than this idea. No! The reason why the adult no longer wonders is not because he has solved the riddle of life, but because he has grown accustomed to the laws governing his world picture. But the problem of why these particular laws hold, and no others, remains for him just as amazing and inexplicable as for the child. He who does not comprehend this situation misconstrues its profound significance, and he who no longer wonders about anything, merely demonstrates that he has lost the art of reflective reasoning. . . .
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> Every world picture is characterized by the real elements of which it is composed. The real world of exact science, the scientific world picture, evolved

> from the real world of practical life. But even this world picture is not final, but changes all the time, step by step, with every advance of inquiry.
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> Such a stage of development is represented by that scientific world picture which today we are accustomed to call "classical." Its real elements, and hence its characteristic feature, were the chemical atoms. In our own day, scientific research, fructified by the theory of relativity and the quantum theory, stands at the threshold of a higher stage of development, ready to mould a new world picture for itself. The real elements of this coming world are no longer the chemical atoms, but electrons and protons, whose mutual interactions are governed by the velocity of light and by the elementary quantum of action. From today's viewpoint, therefore, we must regard the realism of the classical world picture as naive. But nobody can tell whether some day in the future the same words will not be used in referring to our modern world picture, too.

Thus even the progressive "realities" disclosed by science are not the final reality, but only steps along the way in the march of human thought toward an ever-receding goal. Prof. Planck speaks of this inner world of things in themselves, a world unmodified by the limitations of human sense perception and of scientific method, as "the metaphysically real world" which forever challenges the ingenuity of the scientist and "fortifies repeatedly his hope of eventually groping his way still a little nearer to the essence of objective nature, and of thereby gaining further clues to her secrets."

These are not, of course, the words of a modern Positivist, but those of a Platonic Idealist—of a man for whom the world of physical experience, as seen through our senses, is but the approximate and often deceptive reflection of the world of things as they are.

Platonic mysticism goes a step further. It proposes, as Socrates does in the *Phaedo*, that the order of metaphysical reality, while approachable in terms of the approximate descriptions of sense perception—the method of science—may be truly understood by the powers of metaphysical perception resident in every human being. Recalling the philosophical investigations of his youth, Socrates tells of his early enthusiasm for the books of Anaxagoras, in whom he found a teacher who attempted to explain the nature of things by their *physical* causes. Socrates soon became disillusioned with this approach, for, he said, a merely physical explanation of human life has no more value than to say "that I sit here because my body is made of bones and muscles, . . . forgetting to mention the true cause, which is, that the Athenians have thought fit to condemn me, and accordingly I have thought it better and more right to remain here and undergo my sentence. . . ."

Looking back on his interest in the speculations of Anaxagoras, Socrates proceeded:

> I thought that as I had failed in the contemplation of true existence, I ought to be careful that I did not lose the eye of soul; as people may injure their bodily eye by observing and gazing on the sun during an eclipse. . . . And I thought I had better have recourse to ideas, and seek in them the truth of existence. I dare say that the simile is not perfect—for I am very far from admitting that he who contemplates existences through the medium of ideas sees them only ' through a glass darkly," any more than he who sees them in their working and effects.

In the *Republic*, Socrates makes it plain that he regards the eye of soul as a veritable organ of the human spirit, "more precious by far than ten thousand bodily eyes," by which alone the truth may be seen. And, he maintains, reasoning and thinking about the nature of things awakens the faculty of soul-perception, which for most men is "literally buried in an outlandish slough."

This is the rational mysticism of Plato, amounting to much more than the arrival at the nature of things by disputation, for which it is frequently mistaken. And this sort of mysticism, it seems to us, is a much-needed companion of the Platonic idealism of which Prof. Planck is so ardent an advocate.