

THE SYSTEMS IN OUR LIFE

COMPETITION is essential to a free economy—it may be essential to our kind of "free society"; yet competition, in its most "developed" form, is *war*, as Clausewitz said. But victory in war requires an economy controlled by the State—even preparation for modern war means the relative loss of economic freedom, and, as the critics of compulsory military training point out, considerable loss in personal freedom.

Nationalism has been a dominant force in "modern progress." It has awakened libertarianism, stimulated scientific discovery, fostered industrial ingenuity. Nationalism often evokes a spirit of self-sacrifice, formulates conceptions of the public good and provokes men to heroic acts through love of country and countrymen. Yet the cluster of emotions which have grown up around the national idea now threatens the world with atom bombs.

Technology has given us leisure, a vast variety of labor-saving devices, and endless facilities in mechanical production, transportation and communication. Technological progress seems to be proceeding in geometrical progression. Even admitting that large investments in machinery of now obsolete design hold back the use of new inventions, the rate of progress during the past fifty years has exceeded even the most optimistic predictions. The utopian imagination apparently cannot keep pace with the practical inventiveness of technologists. On paper, with human factors left out of consideration, the twenty-first century should see a world in which there is no drudgery at all, and very little "work" of any sort, in the familiar sense of this term.

But technology in harness with competition and nationalism has led to periodic economic disaster, growing out of brittle rigidities in the

pattern of economic relationships. It has also led to incalculable destructiveness, with accompanying dehumanization of the national community. Technology seems to generate compulsions which shatter lives and break hearts, through processes which are as unavoidable as they are impersonal.

These three ideas, Competition, Nationalism and Technology, cover and present the major dilemmas of our time—at least, they are among the most obvious of the dilemmas we face, which means that most efforts at problem-solving attack the human situation in these terms. There are other levels of analysis, of course, such as the religious assertion that a basic human tendency to "sin" is the root of all evil; or, the claim that the money system is at fault. But the great majority of people who concern themselves with questions of human welfare come to grips with these dilemmas.

What are the available or supposed solutions? Against the principle of competition is set the principle of cooperation. In economics, two forms of cooperation are possible—relative and absolute. There are innumerable types of relative cooperation. The international cartel is one. A cartel is a method of limiting or eliminating competition. From the viewpoint of the large industrial producer, cartel agreements have great advantages. All sorts of practical and even ethical justifications can be made for cartels. When two giant producers of a given product or class of products agree on how the world market is to be divided between them, they eliminate many otherwise wasteful operations. Competitive selling costs are reduced; destructive price-cutting ceases; an exchange of formulas may enormously increase productive capacity for both. The plain common sense of cartel agreements can hardly be avoided, and the same common sense applies in

principle to the "friendly agreements" among competitors in every line of business, from door-to-door pedlars to great nations with special tariff arrangements. Modern business is literally an endless web of relative competition and relative cooperation, the actual adjustments in every case being determined by varying factors of self-interest, plus the modifications imposed by government regulation and political influence. But one could say, also, that modern business at the same time is a web of relative *monopolies*, with all that this implies.

It should be noted that, thus far, cooperation is under discussion as meaning some *system* of cooperation, and not as an abstract social principle. Absolute cooperation, as a legally defined system, is necessarily totalitarian in form, and this fact—it has emerged recognizably as a fact in recent history—imposes another type of dilemma upon our problem: we might call it a dilemma of the second degree. The lesson of this sort of dilemma seems to be that every principle of solution for our social ills, when made into a "system," tends, when fully applied, to destroy its own value as a principle.

Yet we cannot live without system; actually, we have and need systems of many sorts, and perhaps shall always need and have them. We shall need them, at any rate, in any foreseeable future.

Let us look at some other types of "systems" or ideas for systems. Nationalism, as a complex of ideas and emotions, involves a system designed for achieving political ends. Internationalism, as a solution for the evils of nationalism, has not yet been tried, so that only speculative judgments can be made concerning how it would "work." One thing, however, is evident. A successful system of political internationalism would involve many more psychological subtleties than a system of nationalism. Nationalism is not simply a physical and functional unity—it is a psychological unity as well—and to propose a system of internationalism which neglects the need for psychological unity is

to overlook the essential problem. Meanwhile, the social "machinery" of modern nations is geared to economic self-interest and to nationalist psychological unity. How, then, can we expect to superimpose an internationalist order upon the nations of the world, without first redesigning our economic relationships and changing our psychological attitudes? The best-known internationalist of our time—a man who really *means* his internationalism—is, speaking objectively, not merely a man without a country—he is a man without a home. Garry Davis renounced all allegiance to a particular nation and later declared that he would participate in no aggressively national actions—such as war. Garry Davis may have a home in the hearts of the people who admire and support him, but this is a "metaphysical" sort of residence. His internationalism brings him into practical difficulties in numerous aspects of everyday life. He has to have special permission or a special invitation to live anywhere at all. That is what happens to a man who not only talks internationalism, but is determined to live it.

Internationalism as a "system" is a collection of ethical precepts, politically interpreted. We find it easy to talk about how the world *ought* to be reorganized along international lines, as though internationalism were some kind of icing that could be spread on the cake of conflicting national interests. Ethically inspired "systems," in short, are intellectual systems which assume that ethical attitudes have already been developed in the people who are to be governed by the system. Or, to put the matter more clearly, internationalism is basically an ethical attitude of mind, and not a system. An international system might result from the general spread of an international attitude of mind, but will never precede it. We ought, therefore, to stop speaking of internationalism as though it were simply a scheme of organization. The idea of internationalism developed historically as an ethical antidote to the abuses of nationalism and the abuses of competition as linked with those of nationalism. *To what extent do those abuses*

themselves form the theoretical foundation for our ideas about internationalism?

Social psychologists tell us that among the most serious problems of a technological society is the loss of personal initiative by the workers on a mass production assembly line. Much attention is now being given to the creation of artificial "incentives" for factory employees. The factors of independent thinking and self-reliance, it is found, must be "put back" into the lives of mass production workers, just as vitamins and minerals have to be restored to foods by special processing treatments. (The separate preparation of vitamins which technology has removed from foods is already a large industry.)

Fifty years ago, a "progressive" Westerner, looking forward to an era of great technical progress, would have smiled with condescension at the saying of Lao-Tse:

Were I the ruler of a little State with a small population, and only ten or a hundred men available as soldiers, I would not use them. I would have the people look on death as a grievous thing, and they should not travel to distant countries. Though they might possess boats and carriages, they should have no occasion to ride in them. Though they might own weapons and armour, they should have no need to use them. I would have the people return to the use of knotted cords [a device for recording events]. They should find their plain food sweet, their rough garments fine. They should be content with their homes, and happy in their simple ways. If a neighboring State was within sight of mine—nay, if we were close enough to hear the crowing of each other's cocks and the barking of each other's dogs—the two peoples should grow old and die without there ever having been any mutual intercourse.

Today, we wonder how we can regain the values that Lao-Tse described without losing our cosmopolitan outlook. At any rate, we know, now, that Lao-Tse was no fool. Our great need is to reconcile the all-devouring dynamism of the machine with the serenity of a simple life—to possess once more the political integrity in self-government of the Greek City State, or of the New England Town Meeting, without waiting

until some manmade cataclysm reduces our civilization to a few, surviving small communities.

Other dilemmas come to a focus in the ideas of "Liberalism," "Conservatism," "Capital," and "Labor." Liberalism used to mean freedom, but during the nineteenth century it gradually came to mean *control*, as Herbert Spencer long ago pointed out. Conservatism used to mean entrenched self-interest, and now it is beginning to mean, for some, at least, the reliance on sagacity and experience in the management of human affairs, instead of rushing into new social experiments which, once performed, cannot be reversed. Today, the most rabidly "conservative" economists are the young men who *almost* became totalitarians in the name of Liberalism, but stopped in time to save their reputations and their jobs. It would probably be correct to say that the only really "liberal" economists left are the ones who are very uncertain about their practical theories, and stubbornly hopeful about their ethical feelings. The same sort of comment might be made about the Capital-Labor controversy, which, more than likely, will end in some sort of inter-organizational monopoly of power, in which large labor and employer groups both participate.

One may say, of course, that the human race will muddle on, as it always has done, and that these "dilemmas" are not half as bad as they seem. Perhaps so, but it seems worth-while to describe them and to suggest that they consistently direct attention to one conclusion: namely, that some all-important factor is missing in our calculations. It is not that we have to ignore these problems in the terms that they are usually defined, but that we must add some deeper insight to the discussion of them all.

Fundamentally, the difficulty seems to be that we have no *functional* conception of ethics. Our ethical ideas are only sentiments, when not merely sentimental. As a result, we are able to divorce "practical" activities from ethical values, hoping to add an ethical element or two, somewhere, sometime, when we find it convenient. We

mistake the possession of the virtues for ethics, not realizing that virtues are only the static shells of ethical attitudes, and not their living essence. And in consequence of this, revolutionaries who want "action" imagine that ethics become "practical" only when embodied in some rigid ideological system.

The ethical impoverishment of the modern world must have an explanation, and it lies, we think, in a number of subtly materializing substitutions we have made for a genuinely ethical outlook on human affairs. Why has the revolutionary movement been typified by men who are harshly contemptuous of the bourgeois virtues—who are Machiavellian in their strategy and Jesuitical in their pretensions? For the same reason that the Middle Classes are blind to the elements of truth in the revolutionary attack on the injustices and hypocrisies of modern life. Bourgeois virtues are a passive substitute for ethics, and angry revolution a dynamically violent one. And the "liberal," middle-of-the-road compromise between the two has the good qualities of neither, while remaining equally blind to the heart of the problem.

It seems that we have no choice except to begin practicing, in earnest, a kind of Socratic heroism. Socrates had many extraordinary qualities, but the one that is especially needed today is his habit of challenging the conventional systems of his time, the orthodox judgments of right and wrong. In Periclean Athens, there were just as many incompatible systems in operation as there are at the present time, even though they had not grown into such noticeable conflict. The dilemmas, that is, were not self-evident. Socrates made them more evident through his conversations, and this, being embarrassing to the political and social leaders of Athens, brought him to his death. Today, the dilemmas themselves confront us, rather than the warning voice of Socrates, so that we may be more easily persuaded to reflect upon the sort of questions he might ask, if he were here.

Socrates, let us remember, never mistook a system for a principle. For him, the good of the State's prestige was not the same as the good of human society. He could not regard the fulfillment of custom as the unerring course of justice. Socrates did not consult the din of the market place to know what is right, but his inner god, his *daimon*. He made this the inviolable rule of his entire career. It was his rule to live by principle, and the meaning of principle in each decision was a fresh meaning, lightened by new circumstances. The incompatibilities of systems were dissolved by Socrates because he never let a system usurp its own source of authority—the active conscience of individuals. He never let a system fashion morality, but made systems bow to his own moral will.

How did Socrates "know" what was right and what was wrong? He asked his awakened soul. That is about all that we can say, or anyone can say. It is, of course, an insufficient answer for those who want a "system" to tell them what to do. But it is answer enough for anyone who has learned the folly of expecting a mechanical substitute to do the work of active, ethical intelligence.

Letter from SWITZERLAND

GENEVA.—The Swiss people have for the third time this year expressed their unquestioned determination to retain the democratic freedom they have always enjoyed. Their first stand was against the Bircher law (MANAS, June 29); the second against monetary control and taxes to be imposed by the Federal Government. To understand the third, it is necessary to look for a moment at the Swiss Constitution, which confers on the people two powers by which they may direct and restrain the Central Government. One of these, the *Initiative*, permits the people to demand the "elaboration, the modification or the suppression of any law" once the required number of signatories to the petition is obtained. Should the Government oppose such an Initiative, it is required to offer a counter-plan. The other is the *Referendum*, which establishes that the people shall be consulted before any change in the Constitution can be effected. Save in cases of "urgency and necessity," where the safety and the welfare of the nation is at stake and when there is not time to resort to the referendum, there is no by-passing this obligation by the Government.

These two constitutional provisions are the Magna Charta or the Bill of Rights of Switzerland. They assure the decentralization of control and they render impossible—in theory, at least—the establishment of an autocratic rule or a dictatorship.

But during World War II, conditions of urgency and necessity made it seem impracticable for the Government to go to the people with every "war measure" which might be questioned. "Necessity" dictated legislation. The power of the Central Government became virtually complete, and the habit of ignoring the people's rights grew as the love of power entwined its tentacles about the conscience of the Government.

Dissatisfied with this highhandedness, the people became restive, and taking advantage of their constitutional right of the Initiative (Article 106), proposed certain measures designed to end this abuse. While agreeing to retain the clauses relative to "urgency and necessity," they introduced guaranties of protection of the people. These stipulated that the country might demand a referendum on all legislation overstepping constitutional provisions; the referendum was not obligatory for proposed laws within the framework of the Constitution.

For eighteen months, the people were put off by M. von Steiger who, with an indifference born of self-assurance, refused to report on this Initiative or to offer the counter-plan provided for by law, on the grounds that he was occupied with more important matters. When finally forced to recognize the people's demand, M. von Steiger chose a date for voting most unfavourable to the country. Today he and his followers stand repudiated by the country, and he himself, did the law permit such a step, would resign his position. As it is, he must return to the more local politics of his Canton, leaving national questions alone.

This *esprit Fronde* has taken the Government by surprise. But the Democracy of Switzerland was considered threatened, and the result was a vote ignoring all "advice" from political leaders, from the syndicates and from Government spokesmen. Party lines were blotted out, linguistic areas lost their boundaries.

The leading papers rejoice in what they call a "return to direct Democracy." They recognize how far Switzerland had strayed from her historic path, and they appreciate how dangerously she was approaching that insidious centralization of power which would lead inevitably to a totalitarian state.

SWITZERLAND CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

INJUSTICE IS BLINDER

ONCE again we are indebted to the Henry Regnery Co. of Chicago for a book which brings to the reading public neglected facts on crucial issues and neglected points of view. *The High Cost of Vengeance*, by Freda Utley, is an analysis of the "victor-and-vanquished" psychology and sociology, and the economic manipulation incident to the occupation of Germany.

Miss Utley digests a considerable amount of factual and historical material, but she is prompted by motives different from those of the usual researcher. *The High Cost of Vengeance* is designed to educate public opinion in the direction of demanding revision of Occupation policies. The book is timely, for, as the author puts it,

Only very recently has the American public become aware of the fact that total victory burdens the United States for good or ill with total responsibility, not only for the fate of the German people but for the destiny of Europe. The mirage of the United Nations Organization in which the lion and the lamb were to lie down together and the victor nations were to remain friends forever is now dispelled.

The introductory chapter contains a much-needed resume of the origins of both World War I and World War II. While historians such as Sydney Bradshaw Fay and Harry Elmer Barnes have provided sufficient documentary material for refuting the claim that Germans are uniquely "belligerent" by temperament, Freda Utley draws some thought-provoking conclusions which go a little beyond the historian's usual sphere. She writes:

In the half-century which elapsed between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I, Germany was at peace, whereas Britain and France conquered most of Africa and extended their Asiatic colonial empires, Russia fought Turkey and Japan; and the United States acquired new territory by wars with Spain and Mexico.

The tragedy of modern history is that the Germans have always been kicked around when they were pacifically minded, with the natural result that the apostles of violence have again and again won the

leadership of the nation, following the failure of the democrats and antimilitarists to win a fair deal for the German people, or protect them from attack.

Incredible as it may sound to casually misinformed Americans, who assume that there is at least approximate justice in whatever stern measures are taken by the Occupation authorities, it will come as a distinct surprise to learn that pacific sentiment in Germany was so strong—even after the unfairnesses perpetrated by the Allies of World War I at Versailles—that Adolph Hitler found it necessary to abjure war publicly when representing the Nazi party before the Reichstag in 1933. Hitler's words were as follows:

The outcome of war would be greater insecurity, increased economic misery and yet more wars. To start such utterly senseless action would lead to the collapse of the present order of society. A Europe sinking into Communist chaos would produce a period of crisis the duration of which cannot be estimated. The three principles which are the mainspring of our revolution do not menace the interests of other nations at all. On the contrary they can prevent the threatening Communist upheaval and lead to the construction of a people's state based on the principle of private property as the basis of culture. The re-establishment of a stable and authoritative state leadership.

(If the verboten, third-from-the-last word were omitted from this statement, we would be willing to bet that it could be tacked on to a good many politicians' speeches and remain undetectable.)

While it has been amply demonstrated that there was little or no sincerity in such expressions by der Führer, the fact that he uttered these words at all, merely as "policy," should make it clear that no modern nation is without its pro-peace elements—no more than it is without its fanatical militarists. Only as we become persuaded of this fact will we gain the capacity to deal intelligently with a nation which has "lost a war."

Like many liberals and leftists, Freda Utley particularly stresses the necessity for supporting the present influence of those who once battled against Nazi militarism in Germany. Since we can hardly fail to admit that the occupation authorities received little psychological preparation for their task, such as

that afforded by the material in *The High Cost of Vengeance's* early chapters, it is only logical to conclude that the full importance for lasting peace of the naturally pacific segment of the German population was never grasped. And, therefore, the Occupation authorities, however well-intentioned, could not make a constructive beginning in the rehabilitation of Germany by encouraging its most enlightened elements.

Freda Utley's forceful complaint against American doings in Germany, however, is not directed so much against the U. S. Army as against Government Officials whose recommendations on policy set the general pattern and tone for the early period of the Occupation. One does not have to absorb all of Miss Utley's statistics to be able to discern what that psychology was, for it came clearly into view during the Nuremberg trials. In a sense, one could say that *The High Cost of Vengeance* is an effective diatribe against the psychology of Nuremberg, bulwarked by first-hand observation of the crippling unfairness of industrial dismemberment. Innumerable factories having little or nothing to do with the German war effort were dismantled, just as their owners were making herculean efforts to put them back into operating efficiency. And this was possible only because it was *assumed* that the Germans must belong to another order of humanity than ourselves, with no real right to "life and liberty." Similarly, at the Nuremberg trials, the defendants were allowed no recourse to the precedents of either German or American law, while the prosecutors kept up a facade of following the forms of American jurisprudence. A Swiss journalist quoted in *The High Cost of Vengeance* made the most telling point on the Nuremberg trials simply by quoting what Alexander Hamilton had said in 1788:

To establish an act as a crime after it has been committed, or in other words to punish people for things which did not violate any law when committed, and the practice of arbitrary detention, were at all times the most favorite and also most horrid tools of tyranny.

The consequences are subsequently listed succinctly by Freda Utley:

Many of the condemned at Nuremberg were, no doubt, guilty of hideous crimes and deserved their sentences. But, as the Swiss journalist pointed out, the effect of verdicts based on ex post facto legislation violates the sense of justice so that even justified convictions leave doubts among a large number of people. We have made martyrs of criminals by the Nuremberg trials, and given a new lease *on* life to Nazi doctrines by our own transgressions against fundamental democratic principles.

Freda Utley has another thesis in which we are less interested—that we are bound to lose the hegemony of Europe to Russia because of a very simple equation: The Germans will probably come to fear Russia more than America, and reluctantly enter the Russian orbit, because Russia is closer and therefore ultimately more powerful; our policies in Germany, while perhaps slightly more enlightened than those of the Russians, have nevertheless failed to win sufficient respect to encourage the German people to adopt an ethical basis for political decision, which, in turn, might enable them to override the fear-motivation. The Weimar Republic, for instance, after World War I, was never permitted an aura of dignity and freedom in which to function. And now, the same thing happens again. How can a people "learn" democracy without freedom to practice it?

We do not doubt that this contention of Miss Utley's should be taken seriously, but it seems to us that the task of preserving the humanity within ourselves is far more important than preserving dominance over Europe —making the most valuable contribution of this book the light it throws on so many of our conventionalized nationalist prejudices.

SOCRATES AGAIN

THERE is a logic in the fact that most serious discussions of contemporary problems end in the issue of war. War, it is true, exerts a hideous fascination over most writers. It is easy to invoke as the sum of all evils, and, from another point of view, it is a superlative form of human expression: war is an absolute. There is something in human beings which makes them revolve around absolute ideas like moths around a flame. And in our epoch, the absolute with the most attractive power is *war*.

But the fact that the roads of discussion lead to the subject of war is more than a literary device. The familiar intellectual approaches to the problems of human society are almost all analytical in method. They emphasize differences, oppositions, and revel in limiting definitions. Just as war absorbs all the problems of society in one great mindless destruction, so the writer, dealing with the problems in intellectual terms, finds his "resolution" of them in the nihilism of ideas—again, war.

It is easy for a writer to define war. But what is peace? Someone has said that peace is much more than merely a set of rules under which people may live together without throwing the crockery at one another and periodically breaking up all the furniture. If we knew as much about the essence of peace as we do about war, we should have no difficulty in defining it. The mind might suggest the conditions of peace as surely as, today, it runs in the opposite direction.

To know about peace, of course, would be something quite different from ignoring war. One does not free himself of an obsession by pretending that it doesn't exist, but by finding another reality elsewhere. This, actually, it seems to us, is the contribution to modern society of the pacifist. His strange religious notions and "unrealistic" arguments are of no real importance beside the simple demonstration that he offers of a

person who refuses to involve his *will* in war-making.

In our lives, together, we are dealing most of all with psychological experiences. Possibly the laws we need to study are almost entirely psychological. If this be the case, then the terrible preoccupations that we feel for this, that or the other phase of experience are of far greater importance than the experience itself. Here, perhaps, we have reached another Socratic conclusion; and perhaps, too, in finding our way to the Socratic outlook, we have discovered one of the keys to the meaning of peace.

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

SINCE it is so difficult, as parents often remark, to find suitable interest-projects in which both parents and children can participate, it should be worth-while to devote our regular space to an experimental suggestion. For instance, a strong case may be made for the natural responsiveness of most children to a study of foodstuffs. Readers of Ralph Borsodi's *Flight From the City* may recall the ingenious features of the Borsodis' home food-study-and-production program, and the related suggestions for improvement in the psychology of education. There is little doubt that when parents and children share in a situation where such study becomes almost necessary to balancing the family budget, it may produce considerable practical growth in the child's general capacity to plan intelligently. Quite possibly, too, all children have a high degree of potential interest in the study of the vitamins, calories and minerals in different foods, at least during the stage where they become consciously preoccupied with improving their own physical appearance, strength, eyesight, coordination and endurance.

Last week we discussed at length the inadvisability of repeated use of the words "should" and "ought" in parental recommendations to children. Everyone knows that the "ought" approach is the usual one in respect to the eating of spinach, salads, etc.—all apparently unpalatable items which parents feel a duty to insist that their children consume. But children do not usually like to do the things they *should* do, and small wonder. Neither does any adult—that is, if, as in the case of the child, someone else points out to him where his duty lies with an insufferable all-knowingness. The *study* of food is an entirely different thing. Even a four-year-old child may be considerably fascinated by the story of food, and, more than the adult whose eating habits are set, can easily modify initial tastes by acquiring a conviction that certain

elements in certain foods will be especially helpful to his physical development.

Turning again to the persuasive arguments advanced in Caroline Pratt's *I Learn From Children* (MANAS, June 29), we can see that one of the most valuable of Progressive education methods is in encouraging children to participate in the preparation of meals. Obviously, there is no need to introduce the child to meal preparation by suggesting that he "should" do something around the home. Some special dish which the child likes and which contains valuable ingredients—providing a blissful opportunity for agreement between parent and child—may be prepared eagerly by the child if he is asked if he would like to know how to do it. A simple beginning of this sort can be gradually extended throughout the years, the rate depending upon the child's own desire for participation.

Then there are the most ordinary things which can be made the focus of education in respect to foods. Orange juice is known to lose its value in vitamin C after standing for but a short period of time. If the child feels that he is cheated of something unless his juice is fresh he will tend to be more interested in preparing it himself and drinking it at once. If he knows that highly advertised breakfast foods and cereals have been proved, by laboratory tests, to be far inferior to natural or whole grains, he may enjoy feeling that he has a little more maturity on the food subject than many of his contemporaries. Unfortunately, many children have parents who are entirely indifferent to their responsibility to select the most beneficial foodstuffs; or, occasionally, the parents are fanatics on the subject. The child needs something better than either of these extremes. (We can hardly blame the children of over-zealous dieticians for resolving never to eat anything except chocolate pie and French fried potatoes, for the child will instinctively rebel at any extreme of this sort unless he happens, at the moment, to be similarly preoccupied himself.)

Food, however, provides us with the stamina, the nerve patience, and the vitality which are essential in all of our human relations. When we fail to do our best to bring our bodies up to whatever their natural capacity may be, we are doing harm to much more than our stomachs or our waistlines—we are letting down all the human beings with whom we now have contact or ever shall have contact, because we shall be less able to give them the best of ourselves in terms of vitality and physical attractiveness.

It is true that some children, once started on the road to the study of food, may easily become rather overwhelmed by the subject for a time, at least from the standpoint of adults. But this kind of intense interest does less harm to children than to adults, and may even serve a particularly useful function during that period of life when so much of the young person's concentration will in any case be focussed upon improving his physical condition or appearance. The child who passes through a fanatical flush of enthusiasm for eating only the best and finest foods will probably lose the tendency to over-emphasize this aspect of life as he comes to mental and emotional maturity. Yet the basic lessons learned from the time when his interest was so high will be retained, largely subconsciously, and serve as an influence towards good health and cheerful disposition.

One way for the parent to begin such an experiment with a child is to make a very simple value chart of the foods which are already habitually used in the home. If the parent is able to tell the child the component values of these familiar foods, it then should be easy for both parents and children to pass to a consideration of what *other* things need to be added to make the total diet most beneficial. Any book giving vitamin, calory and mineral tables will serve the purpose, and only brief attention, if concentrated, need be given to "study."

Someone may now remind us that the children of our disorganized society need proper food for the mind and emotions far more than

superior physical nutriment. We are not making these recommendations because we think physical health is the first concern of life; rather, it seems that the teaching of dietetics to children via home experimentation affords them an excellent opportunity for developing their powers of concentration and judgment. The "well-integrated" or "well-balanced" man, according to the philosopher's definition, is one who is able to deal constructively with any phase of normal living. The child who is properly introduced to a study of foods may make a wholesome acquaintance with science, philosophy, and religion, all at the same time, if full advantage is taken of this opportunity. A living science is one conceived in terms of its direct service to human welfare, and all activities designed to improve bodily nourishment are a good introduction to appreciation of the most commendable trends in scientific investigation. Religion, in its deepest sense, may be regarded as a harmonious identification between man and nature, and an appreciation of the intricacies of cooperation between the organic and inorganic worlds, until nature is seen as a Whole. Philosophy is the development of the capacity of evaluation in such manner as to provide a rational groundwork for putting our best abstract judgments to practical use.

Food is certainly not the only thing which can be used for this sort of education, but since it is so often described as the first basic requirement of human life, it naturally recommends itself for attention.

FRONTIERS

On "Yielding To Reality"

THIS Department has received a long and informative letter pursuing matters discussed here in the issue of Nov. 9—on the relationships between the American Indians and the English colonists of the seventeenth century. We are invited to correct what was apparently a misleading statement about a tract by Roger Williams—in which he denied "the right of King James to bestow on anyone lands belonging to the natives, maintaining that the English could obtain such lands only by purchase from the Indians." We said that, in consequence of the statements in this tract, the elders of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies were much alarmed. The reason for this alarm, which was limited to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, we are now informed, was not that the Puritans feared any practical loss of their lands from Williams' declaration, but that in it he, a member of the colony, had called the King of England a liar—"hardly a thing which the Bay authorities would care to have reach the hands of their enemies."

The rest of the letter deals with a number of particular subjects which cannot be discussed with profit except at great length. Its general burden, however, is this: The actions of the white colonists were not exceptionally reprehensible, nor the reactions of the Indians exemplary. It is unjust to idolize the Indian at the expense of the civilization-building New Englanders, who did only what many others were doing and are doing today. Willison's *Saints and Strangers* is rejected as biased and inaccurate on the Pilgrims and Indians; Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents of American Thought* (which seemed especially good, to us, on New England theocracy) is similarly condemned. The charge against Willison is specific: "He has followed the trend of making the Pilgrims, Puritans, and all Anglo-Saxon groups—the whipping boys of all the envious, disgruntled, greedy, grasping, hyphenated groups, who cry to high heaven if anybody 'discriminates' against them; yet demand discrimination in their favor, economically, socially, and politically."

It is true that Mr. Willison has his moments of pleasure at the expense of the Pilgrims, when contrasting their professions with their practice, and probably most of his readers will share his enjoyment, but of actual animus we found not a trace. To avoid torturing this question with further debate, it is suggested to readers who may fear that they have been exposed to a cloud of "bias" in our quotations from *Saints and Strangers*, that they read the book to judge for themselves, turning, for comparison, to Bradford's own history, *Of Plimoth Plantation*, printed in Boston in 1898, by order of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This ought to be sufficient to judge of the integrity of Mr. Willison's account, so far as a "slanting" of the facts is concerned. If any reader finds Governor Bradford's unctuous piety less objectionable than Mr. Willison does, he is, we suppose, entitled to feel "misled."

At no point, anywhere, in our discussions of the American Indians, has it been our desire to establish the Indians as a "superior" race. The fact is that, until thirty or forty years ago, it was quite customary for persons of Anglo-Saxon heritage to make this claim for themselves, either directly or by implication; and, as a study like Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought* shows (in the chapter on "Racism and Imperialism"), the aggressive traits of the politically and economically dominant society of North America were frequently taken as evidence that American expansionism was fulfilling an intent both "natural" and "Divine."

The defense of the Pilgrims offered by our correspondent is that they were pretty much the same as everyone else, so why single them out for criticism? Injustices similar to those imposed on the Indians are commonplaces of history, it is said. Roger Williams himself finally obtained a patent for his settlement in Rhode Island, and for other lands not yet "paid for" by the whites. Thus even the sainted Williams was "forced to yield to realities."

From what we can glean from this correspondent's letter, Williams did the best he could on behalf of his ideals, and it would be foolish to ask more of any man. But the same cannot be said of the vast majority of the white settlers in their relations

with the Indians. The exceptions, like Williams, are notable. William Penn's "Holy Experiment," for one, showed that the peaceful Quakers could live in close proximity to the Indians without fear of attack. The Quakers treated the Indians like human beings, not heathen "savages" to be used and exploited whenever possible.

It is important to realize how unjustly the Indians were treated for the reason that about 350,000 Indians are still living in the United States. An honest facing of the crimes that have been committed against them *might* lead us to repair this damage to some extent. If the reputation of the Pilgrim Fathers does not come out unscathed in a review of how they treated the Indians, it hardly matters. Even people "descended" from the Pilgrims ought to be able to bear such revelations. The distinction of having Pilgrims for one's forebears, after all, is a distinction imposed by the accident of birth, and not anything of which a man may be personally proud. He had nothing to do with it. Nor is his eminence lessened by his ancestors' defects.

Both the Pilgrims and the Puritans came to this country with the highest of religious pretensions. They were very sure that they, and they only, possessed the saving truth. The measure of their certainty is indicated by the fact that, toward the end of the seventeenth century, the righteous leaders of Salem, Mass., hanged nineteen people for "witchcraft" and pressed one person to death on the same charge. These early Americans were undoubtedly "brave" people, as pioneer colonists anywhere must be in order to survive, but the promise of American idealism came much less from them than from the free-thinking Deists and humanitarian leaders of Revolutionary days. In view of the extraordinary claims of the Pilgrims and Puritans to possessing the only true religion, it is certainly reasonable to expect that they would "yield to reality" a little less easily. Our impression of the Sermon on the Mount is that it advocates "yielding" to a reality of a very different sort.

A similar revision of popular history is needed with respect to the part played by the Spanish Missions on the West Coast. The California Indians were systematically *enslaved* by the "gentle"

Franciscan padres. After 1800, it was a settled policy of the Missions to compel conversion by a variety of pressures, including military expeditions. The Indians were herded almost like animals into barracks and made to work for the Missions under threat of physical punishment. After the United States acquired California from Mexico, conditions became even worse, until the Indian culture was completely wiped out. While peonage was abolished after 1848, the release of the Indians for "free enterprise" accomplished their final undoing. "If ever an Indian was fully and honestly paid for his labor by a white settler," wrote J. Ross Browne, Inspector of Indian Affairs on the Pacific Coast, "it was not my luck to hear of it."

No doubt the white settlers, east and west, had the power to misuse and exploit the Indians, and there is no doubt that they used it. One may, of course, adopt a distant and impersonal view of these things, saying that imperialism and pillage are forms of the struggle for existence, and that, given the same opportunities, the Indians might have done far worse. But that would be an Indian responsibility. It happens that we, and not the Indians, are the claimants to the leadership of modern civilization. We have had the historical initiative, not they.

If we felt any suspicion at all that a moral order rules in the relationships between races and cultures, we would long ago have tried to right the wrongs against the Indians, if only out of self-interest in our own future. It is not impossible that the moral disasters suffered by modern Spain are related to the fate imposed by the conquistadors on the Indians of those portions of the Americas over which they ruled; it is certain that the economic disorders which have afflicted Spain for many generations are largely attributable to her adventures in the New World. The days of reckoning may not be over for the Spanish, and they may not have begun for ourselves.