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THINGS ARE IN THE SADDLE

THE question, "Who owns property?" is a loaded question. Any answer at all is bound to bring a ready-made refutation by some interested individual or party, complete with unassailable logic and quotations straight from the Tablets of Moses or the Geological Record and the Laws of Evolution. Take for example what we thought was a fairly innocent statement in MANAS for Feb. 11:

> This humiliating requirement [of being legally "destitute"] of the old Poor Law [of Queen Elizabeth] has been eliminated [in Britain's new social legislation] and an entirely different principle, that of human right, established as the basis for aid.

An independent publisher—one of the few who are left—has challenged this statement in a series of provocative questions. We are going to reproduce a passage from his letter, not because we have space for a point-by-point discussion, but because the entire problem of property rights needs clarification, and the issue is sharpened by his questions:

> Who is to give the aid? Is it the State; is it the majority? What right has the majority to force the minority to give aid to anyone? Who established the human right that man should live without effort; that man should live if he doesn't do what others wanted done enough so that they are willing to pay him for what they want done?
>
> Will you kindly tell what principle establishes the right to live by being supported involuntarily by others? Will you set down some impersonal eternal rule of human conduct that gives any individual a human right to receive aid from anyone against that individual's will? . . . Will you explain to me how an individual can be owner of himself and all he produces if he is compelled against his will to turn over part of what he produces to support some other individual who wants to do not what people are willing to pay for, but to do something that no one is willing to pay for or not enough to support him?

There are two ways to deal with these questions. The first and most popular way is to ignore their force and retort, "What this man is really talking about is the right of the powerful to exploit the weak." It is approved procedure then to review the conditions under which the modern proletariat developed, to describe the mines and factories of England during the early nineteenth century—or, better yet, the mines in Centralia, Illinois, in the United States in 1948, as reported in *Harper's* for March.

But we are not going to brush these questions aside with counter-charges. Nor are we going to say that "there are points on both sides" of the capitalist-socialist controversy. We are going to attempt to understand the assumptions of *laissez-faire* economic theory.

Fundamentally, old-fashioned economic liberalism teaches that human freedom is freedom to acquire material things. If a man has more skill, more ingenuity, more dogged determination than others, he will get more material things, and that, it is argued, is his "right." And agreeably to the analysis of Max Weber, R. H. Tawney, and others, the man who "acquires"—who shows his ability in the manner described in the theory—is deemed a "superior" man (who also, incidentally, vindicates the theory). Conversely, the man who acquires little or nothing, is an "inferior" man who ought to accept without a whimper the slight consideration allotted to him by the "natural laws" of economics.

Now this, we submit, is a false theory of man—false because it is only partly true. The part that is true concerns the fact that a man who is clever and plays the commercial game with determination will probably get rich. The part that is false is the idea that he is in any sense a "superior" man. He is simply an acquisitive man.

Our correspondent asks how an individual can be "the owner of himself and all he produces" if he is required to contribute, against his will, to the support of others. This, we suppose, is an argument against taxation for social purposes. The argument objects, not to serving the welfare of others, but to the *compulsory* service obtained by taxation. Admitting that the compulsion is an evil, and that the Welfare State will doubtless be a sluggish and often vicious form of social organization, what alternative principle of *voluntary* obligation will the champion of "free enterprise" admit?

If he answers, proudly, that that is for him to determine, because *his* skill, *his* labor, and *his* personal industry have given him the right to distribute his wealth as he chooses, or not to distribute it at all, then we must reply that his position is little more defensible than that of the reformer or revolutionist who claims that the wealth belongs to the people and should be distributed by the State.

Where, in the first place, did he get those sterling qualities that helped to make him the possessor of wealth? If they came from God, then *why* did God give them to *him?* If he has no rational explanation for this favoritism on the part of the deity, then it can be argued with equal force that God appointed the reformers and revolutionaries to take his wealth away and to use it for the benefit of others. The theory that a man who gets to the top of the economic pyramid is justified in being as selfish as he pleases is simply the theory that might is right—a wholly amoral doctrine.

True, our correspondent has not argued for the moral right of the acquisitive man to be selfish; he has only argued against the legal right of anyone else to force him to be unselfish. But the fact which stares us in the face is that many men with economic power cruelly abuse it, and history instructs us that the revolts of the proletariat have come after centuries of hideous oppression. In other words, *the man who declares for economic freedom has also to declare for economic responsibility*—he cannot have one without the other. And to be consistent, he ought to go back over the past and admit that he has no right at all to any economic advantage which came to him through channels other than himself as "owner of himself and all he produces." He came into this world naked, without a single possession. Who nourished his body and his mind, who helped him to become the strong and self-sufficient man that he is? Who, indeed, can put a slide-rule on any of these things—can measure his debt to his parents, his teachers, his country and his culture? Who, finally, is this little man who knows so well that he is "owner of himself and all he produces"? Actually, he is infinitely indebted to the whole human race.

All kinds of hidden assumptions lurk in this doctrine of "free enterprise." No man owns more than himself and what he makes. Fine. Let's start by abolishing all land titles, all mineral and water rights—forever. Let's get everything even so that the rugged individualists can start from scratch. And why should a man be permitted to leave his children his wealth when he dies? They didn't "produce" it. Unearned wealth saps character—isn't that one of the many things wrong with the Welfare State? What difference does it make whether a man clips coupons or cashes relief checks, when both mean living without effort"?

Obviously, an argument of this sort is unrewarding. All it can produce is angry men. You can hear the free enterpriser say: *"Are you trying to tell me you're going to stop me from giving my children the best education, the best food, the best future, that money can buy?"* If we followed a low inclination, we'd probably say, "No, mister, nobody's ever been able to tell you anything," but a much better answer would be to ask this question: "What makes you so sure that you know what is the 'best future' for your children, and that money can buy it?"

With the free enterpriser's contention that State charity is no substitute for individual

humanity we have no quarrel at all. Salvation by legislation is as much a folly as salvation by private acquisition. But pseudo-salvation by legislation is what we're going to get, if the acquisitive men of our society continue to ignore their responsibilities and continue to believe that the poor—whether by choice or by ineptitude and personal limitation—are all either lazy no-goods or impractical dreamers.

So, with a persistence born of the belief that the basic assumptions of both the free enterprisers and the social reformers are wrong, we shall go on gnawing away at what seems to be the underlying fallacy they both subscribe to—that man is essentially a material being whose "rights" and "needs" should be defined in material terms.

To put the matter simply, both capitalist and socialist theories derive their ethical principles from economic premises about man. Both make the good of man dependent upon "freedom to possess." The aim of both is to endow him with "things." But human excellence has never been measured by possessions and never will. The two greatest men of whom we have knowledge—Buddha and Jesus—both renounced absolutely any claim to personal possessions. Without a backward glance, Buddha gave up the luxury of an oriental potentate to wander India with a beggar's bowl, seeking enlightenment; and Jesus was wholly unmoved by Satan's offer of all the riches of this world. Did both Buddha and Jesus make a horrible mistake?

They, of course, were neither "practical" business men nor "realistic" social reformers. They both lived before Adam Smith and Karl Marx and could not know that the mainspring of human action is "self-interest." We, living in a more enlightened age, replete with scientific knowledge and atomic bombs, possess still greater sophistication concerning human nature. We know how to bring out the worst in everybody.

And that is exactly the point. We bring out the worst in each other because we are affirmative about the evil in human beings and negative about the good. We evolve an ethical theory to defend our possessions or to justify taking away the possessions of others by violence or State compulsion. This is materialism, whatever ideals we pretend to serve. It is atheism, whatever Gods we claim to adore. It is also political nihilism and moral defeatism. It is time to begin calling things by their right names.

Letter from ENGLAND

LONDON.—It has been said that the state of our civilization reflects the state of our science. Certainly, we live in an age of grave social disorder, which suggests a science bereft of morality, and one unable to extend the operation of causative factors to the field of human conduct and character. Fortunately, here and there a light gleams in the gathering darkness, and the hand of an "irrational" mercy reaches out to help or relieve difficulty and distress. A conclusion of the greatest living student of the brain fortifies us in this practical refusal to acknowledge morality as a by-product of physical evolution. Sir Charles Sherrington writes: "Our inference has to be that we are partly reflex and partly not"—processes arise in the brain "intrinsically" as well as those initiated "extrinsically" by sensory activities. (*The Integrative Action of the Nervous System,* 1947.) We are not wholly circumscribed by the behaviour of reflex self-preservative instincts. For all we know, this may account for two pieces of social legislation now formulated for discussion in the English Parliament!

The Criminal Justice Bill is designed to overcome, on a broad front, the increasing scope and urgency of old problems—the treatment of young offenders, the wastage of human life as the result of antiquated and ignorant methods, and the question of the habitual criminal. Like other countries, England is faced by an appalling increase in juvenile crime of a serious nature. It is proposed to discard imprisonment for the young as a normal form of punishment, and to extend the existing methods of approved schools and probation for young offenders. The Bill contemplates a national probation service, with well-trained probation officers, both men and women, and there are most valuable clauses dealing with mental abnormality and the means for improving the facilities for medical examination. Further, there are proposals for abolishing corporal punishment, and the question of doing away with hanging for murder is likely to be decided by a free vote of members of Parliament along non-party lines.

The other legislation is a Children Bill to provide for the care of children "who from loss of parents or from any cause whatever are deprived of a normal life with their own parents or relatives." It lays down the principle that the natural home is the pattern to which all substitutes should endeavour to approximate, and, to this end, directs that the responsible authorities should discharge their obligations by placing the children in the care of foster-parents.

It is a great deal that, in the midst of economic and other crises, a Government today (with the goodwill of all parties) can find time and purpose enough to ameliorate the lot of those who cannot speak for themselves. It is a witness to the truth that man is not always moved by self-interest, however enlightened. As against the physical scientist, who threatens to become a mere statistician, we need to create a knowledge of the "imponderables" in human nature.

After all, the improvement or deterioration of human nature under the impact of the powerful achievements of physical science have yet to be measured and rightfully appraised. It has not been established that the nature of man is "continuous with that of the animals," or that ethical propositions are "amenable to rational treatment in that their 'natural history' can be traced," as an English writer has suggested recently (Professor C. D. Hardie, *Background to Modern Thought,* 1947). If it be true that some of man's interests depend on the nature of the society in which he lives, it does not follow from this that his moral judgments will also vary. As Professor William McDougall pointed out in the years between World War I and II: "In spite of perennial discussion sustained through twenty-three centuries, we have but little understanding of man's nature, his powers and potentialities." *(Religion and the Sciences of Life.)* Perhaps we have not looked back far enough or in the right direction.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
THE WORLD IN SHADOW

A LAGIER is a "corrective camp" where criminals and "political offenders" are sent to do hard labor in the Soviet Union. There are lagiers in many parts of the Soviet territory, some, even, in the neighborhood of Moscow. The latter, however, are few and relatively pleasant places, but in the vast regions of northern Siberia and Kazakstan there are camps of living death at almost every kilometre. How can anyone know these things? Because of an accident of history, making it possible for some of the unfortunates confined in these camps to regain their freedom.

The Dark Side of the Moon (Scribners, 1947) was compiled by an unnamed friend of the late General Wladyslaw Sikorski. The book tells the story of a million Poles—men, women and children—who were carried off by the Soviets after the invasion of Poland following the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of August 23, 1939. Under the German-Soviet Agreement published in September, Russia occupied an area of 77,720 square miles of Poland, the home of 13,000,000 Poles. Starting February 10 of the following year, 1940, the first mass deportation began. There was another in April, a third in June, and a fourth in June, 1941. The deportations were interrupted by the invasion of Russia by the Nazis—the "accident of history" which led to the Polish-Soviet Pact of 1941, the formation of a Polish Army in Russia under General Anders, and the gradual release—inside Russia—of the million Poles. The inconceivable mistreatment of this Polish Army is an infamous story in itself, ending in two evacuations, one of 44,000 men in Persia, in March, 1942, where they came into the hands of the British, the other in August, when 71,000 Poles, including civilians, left the Soviet Union. After the second Army evacuation, there remained in Russia only "a vast mass of unarmed and increasingly helpless women, children, and civilians." In January, 1943, the Soviet Government declared that all persons previously residing in territories now annexed by the Soviet Union were held to be citizens of the Union. This means, as *The Dark Side of the Moon* explains, that "Poles from at least one-half of Poland must emerge from the war against Germany as enforced citizens of yet another foreign and totalitarian State; permanently and, as it were, 'legally' liable to the policy of deportations, lagier and other institutions described in this book, as well as to other everyday conditions of Soviet civilization equally alien and little less repugnant to minds formed in Europe."

The Dark Side of the Moon is made up of letters from Hell. The story begins when the Soviet troops who had occupied the area allotted to them under the agreement with the Nazis started registering persons to be arrested for deportation. These included, first, everyone with *any* known political opinion. All socialist and trade union leaders, all organizers of working-class, peasant, and youth groups, all civil servants and officials of the Polish Government both local and national, skilled workers of every sort, members of all the learned professions, were to be taken away. But this was only the beginning. The Feb. 10 deportation included whole villages of small farmers along with the persons already listed. The April deportation gathered up the families of the men previously arrested, and the families of men in the Polish Army. The June, 1940 deportation carried off all refugees from other parts of Poland who had fled East from the Nazis in 1939. The 1941 deportation included children from summer camps and orphanages, and all persons who had in any way assisted the Soviet forces in Poland.

The accounts of the sufferings of these people, pieced together from documents written by scores of persons—from old men and women to young girls—who survived, or who in succumbing passed along their story, make up *The Dark Side of the Moon.* There is not a gleam of hope in this book, unless it be in the courage of the human beings whose mental and physical tortures it recounts. It is a record of unimaginable brutality, of betrayals as regular as night and day—of people dragged from their homes at a few minutes' notice, herded into box cars, crowded like animals, left without food, without toilet facilities, almost without ventilation, and often without water. (Four men were shot on one train for begging for water.) Then, the destinations—prison, lagier, and "free exile" in some primitive region.

The lagiers or labor camps are under the strict control of the NKVD—Soviet Russia's omnipotent political police. These camps, which are described from firsthand evidence, extended northward throughout the Komi Republic, and in Kamchatka and in the frigid desolate territories inland from Sakhalin

and Vladivostok, where except for lagiers, there is virtually no human life at all.

> The whole is one vast NKVD state, divided into "zones," each territory enclosed within barbed wire, patrolled by armed guards and their dogs and made doubly secure by lookout towers and storks' nests containing sentries. Each zone covers hundreds of kilometres, and there is generally at least one camp on each kilometre. Thus camps take their names from the kilometres on which they stand, being called "on the hundredth kilometre," "on the thousandth kilometre," "on the fifteen-hundredth kilometre," and so on, as the case may be. . . . Each lagier unit in each group is self-contained, with certain powers of self-government in the hands of the inmates. The division and superintendence of work is in the hands of brigade-leaders, nominated by the convicts themselves, from their own ranks.

All executive posts in lagier are held by the NKVD. The lowest functionary in camp government is the brigade-leader, who distributes the work to be done, oversees it, and makes reports to the NKVD. Compensation is in the form of rations in return for work—the more work the more food; conversely, no work, no food. (The work-day is twelve hours, no days off. Workers are roused at 3:30 a.m.) The apparently "democratic" procedure of allowing the prisoners to choose their own brigade-leaders gives the criminal element of the camps absolute control over all the inmates, for political offenders are never permitted to hold such posts. It is this factor, more than any other, which makes lagier a completely degrading institution, for the brigade-leaders always abuse their power and drive their fellows more ruthlessly, even than the NKVD, hoping to maintain positions of privilege for themselves. Lagier is a bottomless abyss of corruption, bribery, and brutality, in which cheating is the foundation of all human behavior. Betrayal is the principle of advancement, and there are always those who will betray the others to obtain more food for themselves. The totalitarian concentration camp is unique in the evil it creates:

> Nobody who has not studied the records of life in these hells can come within miles of understanding to what abysses of moral stupor and animal need a human being can be reduced, and must be reduced, by all this. This is something entirely different from hardship or exposure over a limited period and due to accident or the urgency of military or other service; conditions which so frequently call out all the best human qualities of fortitude and power of survival. This is a state to which the helpless individual has been condemned by his fellow-creatures and out of which there is no issue, a state containing no hope, and in which the rigour is always increasing and will never be relaxed. Every influence to which the individual is submitted is deliberately aimed at his overthrow as an individual and at his permanent subjection. Everything which is capable of sustaining individual and human dignity is remorselessly ground out of existence. All privacy, all decency, all gentleness and all mutual confidence are deliberately liquidated, and for ever. More than all this, the immensely degrading and animalizing effect of prolonged hunger, and the accompanying stupefying of mental, moral and discriminating powers, is always at work. It is just not humanly possible for the man or woman handed over to this system to maintain the feeblest characteristics of a normal and decent human being, over a term of years. The organism literally ceases to be that of a human being. The human being within the carcass dies progressively; and a suffering, stupefied, and often barely complaining animal takes its place..... Submitted to the lagier system, we should be reduced to the lagier level. We should not be kinder, better, more whole, or, if we got the chance, less tyrannical. The most fearful iniquity of the system, as it is actually carried out, is not even the amount of suffering it inflicts. It is the corruption, the progressive and irreparable corruption of *everybody* within its spread. The knowledge that, like hell, it is eternal and goes on forever. That there is no question of holding out within yourself for say, three years, or even five or eight (in most camps a physical impossibility anyhow) and remaining yourself, or some shadow of yourself, and then leaving it behind. *Nobody leaves lagier behind.* Lagier is for ever.

But lagier was not "for ever" in the case of those Poles who escaped from the Soviet terror, and provided the material for this book. What they report is so horrible that one wonders if reading about it can do any good. And yet, if a great nation of human beings, as a result of the materialism of a political "religion," can look upon other human beings as merely "material" to be used or discarded in the service of the State, and accomplish these things with complete moral indifference, then it is important to grasp the full meaning of this outlook. No man who wants to face the moral decisions of his time, to face, that is, the moral decision within the political issues of his time—

can afford to overlook books like *The Dark Side of the Moon.*

One of the first of such revelations to appear in English was "Human Behavior in Extreme Situations" by Bruno Bettelheirn in *Politics* for August, 1944. Since then, *Politics* has published other accounts of existence in concentration camps, and similar material has appeared in *Partisan Review.* These studies deal mostly with the German camps. Dwight Macdonald's *Responsibility of Peoples* discusses the moral implications of mass crimes such as the gas chamber exterminations of millions of Jews by the Nazis. Macdonald's essay has unique value in its effort to show that so-called "democratic" societies also exhibit "fascist" tendencies which, carried to a logical conclusion, would result in the same treatment of individual men and minority groups as slaves of the all-powerful State. The most recent and probably the most complete analysis of the Nazi concentration camps is *The Other Kingdom,* by David Rousset, formerly a *Time* correspondent, who spent sixteen months in Buchenwald and other German camps as punishment for underground activities during the occupation of France. This book, published in translation by Reynal & Hitchcock in the United States, reveals the full horror of the psychological cruelties in the German camps. The pattern is much the same as in the Russian lagiers, but the Nazis, through the Gestapo, seem to have developed more deliberate techniques of persecution—they were not merely indifferent to human suffering, but inflicted it against the inmates of the camps as a part of the duty of the master race. To belong to a lesser breed was a crime *per se,* and the offenders must be made to admit their degraded nature, even while slowly dying in its counterpart of external conditions which the Nazis had created for them.

Today the Nazi power is broken, their camps emptied of the miserable surviving remnant, their leaders dead: why, then, recall to life these nameless memories? *Because the point of view, the estimate of man, the inhuman political theory which made these things possible, still exists.* As the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out more than two years ago, the concentration camps in the Russian Zone of occupied Germany, including Buchenwald, have been re-opened for "political offenders." The millions of Germans expelled in 1945 from Polish-occupied Germany east of the Oder received the same summary treatment from the Poles that the Soviet authorities accorded the Poles they carried off to prison and to lagier in 1940 and 1941. In Danzig, evictions took place street by street. In the fall of 1945, there were 8,000,000 homeless nomads milling around the provinces near Berlin—mostly old people, women and children, who had arrived in cattle-cars, together with the dead, the dying and the starving. This was the way in which the command of the Potsdam Declaration, that the transfer of population be "orderly and humane," was carried out.

So we may ask ourselves, which is the worse—the brutality founded on a theory of man that regards the individual human as a beast of burden, an animal at best, or the cruel indifference practiced by nations who have become brutalized by fighting a war to "save" the dignity of man?

Today, as many as fifteen million human beings are held in the arbitrary custody of concentration camps, in various parts of the world. If another war comes will the United States be able to avoid adding to the number of these camps, or will forced labor and punitive custody become characteristic elements of the American way of life?

In 1944, Bruno Bettelheim observed: *"It seems that what happens in an extreme fashion to the prisoners who spend several years in the concentration camps happens in less exaggerated form to the inhabitants of the big concentration camp called greater Germany."* Another long war will make a "big concentration camp" of the entire world.

COMMENTARY
THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES

IT is popular, these days, to compare the modern world to the dark oppressions of the novels of Franz Kafka. Even Anne Lindbergh, in *Harper's* for April, recalls Kafka in describing the endless waiting, the apparent futility, which attends the attempt to obtain a visa, a ration book, or any sort of "official" permission, from typical government bureaus "anywhere in Europe."

The Kafka books—or the two we have read, *The Trial* and *The Castle*—are a projection of melancholia. Their protagonists are men who wander like somnambules through a maze of incomprehensibility, and the reader is made to understand that this . . . is "life." One imagines that beneath the skin, the characters who thus combine to declare a universal human defeat are lacking in sinews, bones and internal organs. They certainly have no hearts. There is only the similitude of life, of struggle, of hope, and a hollow echo of human ideals.

In *The Trial* "K" is arrested, subjected to confident threats of prosecution gradually reduced to voiceless terror, and finally stabbed to death. But he is never told what is the charge against him. So, the impotence of modern man is called a Kafka-like predicament. Kafka's characters are spell-bound—either their souls have been sucked away, or they never had any. These people were created to be devoured; they are, and the logic of despair is completed.

There is, it seems, no alternative. While the world of Nature is merely indifferent to the interests of Man, the human world is malignant toward them. . . . But this is an intolerable calumny. The Kafka picture of the world is false because it is a world without moral alternatives, peopled by beings without hope. What is needed, today, is neither anatomists of despair nor foolish optimists, but men who, instead of baring their bosoms to welcome disaster, will search for paths of freedom, however limited, and begin to walk along them. There are always alternatives, and only those obsessed by broken hopes refuse to look for them. It is true that alternatives are hard to find, but that is because too many sights are set by habits from the past, with vision blurred by disillusionments in the present. We dare to believe that no man ever sought the truth and a way to freedom, with determination and failed to find them at all.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

PLATO'S *Republic,* quoted here at length last week to illustrate the perennial hypocrisies of society, also contains certain startling educational proposals which might be considered with benefit. No one, not even the present writer, will regard as fully desirable the family conditions in Plato's State, if understood literally. But startling proposals, if contemplated open-mindedly, may suggest new perspectives from which to regard the contents of our own minds our prejudices and dogmatisms as well as our positive values.

The *Republic* presents a long dialogue on the proper qualifications of a "just" or "virtuous" man. At the outset, Socrates shapes the inquiry into a quest for the conditions which might exist in an ideally governed society, for, as he says, "virtues" cannot really be studied unless we see them interacting with an appropriate environment. (Here, of course, Plato reveals the fundamental difficulty encountered in any discussion of educational theory. It is impossible to talk intelligently about the need of children to be "self-reliant" and "honest" and "considerate" unless we know how the child may actually *practice* self-reliance, honesty and consideration within the framework of a specific society.)

The end of Plato's ideal State, in which the rulers are philosophers rather than politicians, is the greatest possible educational progress for its citizens. Therefore, while Socrates did not suggest sweeping revisions of the lives of ordinarily satisfied artisans and laborers, he proposed revolutionary changes for those who were consciously desirous of contributing to the general good. This class, called the "Guardians," was to forsake all conventional family ties. Men and women belonging to this "class" were to live communally rather than in separate families. The children of Guardians were to be taken from their mothers at birth, so that no woman would know her own child *as such,* although both parents could regard as "theirs" any or all the children born at the same time of year. One's child, in this strange situation, would be one of twenty or thirty or more .and parents were thus encouraged to treat all children with equal consideration and justice.

Those who have read Plato will probably recall that Socrates is invariably concerned with transcending ordinary and admitted values in human relationships by establishing still higher values. The *Symposium,* in which Socrates addresses himself to the problem of love, deals first with "lesser" forms of love in terms of their evident worth, then turns to arguments for a less personal and more universal love. It is to be remembered, therefore, that the hard-hearted proposals occurring in Book V of the *Republic* are directed by this same kind of concern. Such an approach to the problem of education evidently leads Socrates to feel that there is no final difference between the highest sort of love and a fully developed sense of justice. He would maintain, therefore, that the parent who shows parental interest in twenty children, of whom only one is "his own," loves that one child more genuinely because, without prideful or possessive attitudes, he can be more just to him.

What about the society we presently live in? Do the conventional, protective manifestations of love actually assist in the development of moral and mental stamina in children? Can a parent provide a child with an adequate introduction to reality unless he treats him as Child and not as *his* child? Is it possible that the man who regards all children as his children is better able to express the most useful kind of "love" to those with whom circumstances bring him in continued proximity?

It is of interest that a popular contemporary psychiatrist, Dr. Karen Horney, arrives at some of Plato's conclusions. Her most widely read work, *The Neurotic Personality of our Time,* argues that the finest, most useful, most enjoyable type of personal love is realized—paradoxically—by an *impersonal* state of mind:

> One may sometimes hear an offhand definition of love as the capacity to give and take affection. Although this contains some truth, it is much too sweeping to be helpful in clarifying the difficulties with which we are concerned. Most of us can be affectionate at times, but it is a quality that may go with a thorough incapacity for love. The important consideration is the attitude from which affection radiates: is it an expression of a basic positive attitude toward others, or is it, for example, born of a fear that one will lose the other, or of a wish to get the other person under one's thumb? In other words, we cannot take any manifest attitudes as criteria. . . . We also consider it incompatible with our idea of love when we find a person using another only as a means for some purpose, that is, only or mainly because he fulfills certain needs. Although it is very difficult to say what is love, we can say definitely what is not love, or what elements are alien to it.

It is extremely doubtful that Plato would have recommended the arbitrary establishment of his Republic just as it is described, but he clearly maintains, as do Dr. Horney and this column, that the only way to reach toward the elusive qualities of "love" and "justice" is by constantly considering the ways in which their present expressions may be beneficially altered or enlarged. Many families who begin with a normal and natural parental love of children are led to confuse both the "loved" children and the whole of society by allowing a certain type of personal concern to remain static. Any application of Plato's principle of "justice," furthermore, would prohibit the existence of unequal educational opportunities for children of the same mental and emotional capacities.

The child needs to be helped to view the world *whole*, and should not be circumscribed within the limits of a single family's perspective. We surmise that Plato would claim that the highest and most constructive love a parent could show for his children would require him to provide any available surplus capital for the education of all parents' offspring. For Plato, the smaller material benefits which would accrue to any particular child would be far outweighed by the supreme gift which the parent would be presenting—an opportunity for the child to become a man among all men instead of *the* child of *a* family.

FRONTIERS
Soul and Body

"I HAD a case, once," said the professor teaching psychology in one of the "branches" of California's overgrown State University, "a man who had no feeling at all in his hand—just in his hand." The professor, who was obviously talking about wartime experiences to a class in which the men were preponderantly ex-GI's, went on to explain: "No sense, no feeling in his hand, and yet the nerves of the hand belong to the same system as the nerves of the wrist and the arm. If you stuck a needle into his wrist, he'd feel it, but an inch or two further down, he'd feel nothing. The point is, he thought his hand was a unit; he *thought* his hand could be paralyzed, independently of his wrist and arm, so that's what happened to him."

"And that," the professor continued, "is what thinking can do." He was trying to make the class realize that if what a man imagines about his body can reach into, isolate, and in a sense *control* a portion of the autonomic nervous system, what a man thinks can be enormously important. If the thinking of the psychoneurotic war casualty can paralyze his hand, what can prejudice or a distorted theory of human nature do to a man's social outlook? "You have to be careful," the professor was saying, "what you think."

It took a war, it seems, to make collegiate psychology show more interest in the facts of life than in elaborating on the confusions of abstract theory. The most obvious psychological problem of human life is the problem of how the mind, or soul, operates in and on the body. A psychology which does not attempt to deal more or less directly with this problem is not worth giving any time to at all.

It will probably come as a surprise to most readers to learn that Emanuel Swedenborg was all his life haunted by the mysterious relation between the soul and the body, and that his disciplined scientific approach to the problem produced results that are not without value for investigators of the twentieth century. Swedenborg, it will be remembered, was an expert Swedish mining engineer of the eighteenth century who shocked his staid contemporaries with astounding religious revelations which came to him after he had reached middle age. Most puzzling of all was the fact that in all other respects, he remained quite "sound" in his opinions. He is remembered, too, as the man who while many miles away in Gothenburg described in detail the progress of the great Stockholm fire of 1759. He told how the fire began, what district of the city it ravaged, when certain houses were destroyed, and finally, how it was extinguished three doors from his own home.

Several days later a courier from Stockholm brought news that verified Swedenborg's account in every respect.

Signe Toksvig's new life of Swedenborg, however, just issued by the Yale University Press, replaces this casual recollection of the Swedish scientist and mystic with the portrait of a tireless investigator into the mysteries of psychology. Leaving his psychic visions and clairvoyant attainments to a separate evaluation, it remains a fact that from his youth Swedenborg was determined to become learned and practically skilled in most of the science of his time. To ignore this phase of Swedenborg's life because of his attraction to the apparently fantastic in religion would be equivalent to passing by Isaac Newton's discoveries in physics because he, too, had an extraordinary curiosity concerning religious matters and wrote almost as extensively on the subject of religion as on the "Natural Philosophy" which brought him scientific fame.

Miss Toksvig relates that after two years of intensive study of physiology at the centers of European medical learning, Swedenborg completed in 1739 a work called *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, involving, not as the title suggests, a treatise on animal life, but a study of the relation of the soul to the body—for *Anima* is the soul, and the "kingdom" over which it rules is the body.

This book was a serious scientific inquiry. As the modern physiologist, Dr. H. W. Haggard, has said, Swedenborg's conclusions "were based on the best medical knowledge of his time; knowledge that

he gained in the medical school, in the anatomy laboratory, and from the writings of every scientist of his time." From this knowledge Swedenborg deduced conclusions that were startlingly accurate, in the light of later experimental research. He was the first, for example, to point out that "The cerebral cortex is the seat of the psychic functions—of consciousness, perception, sensations, thought." Dr. Haggard is also witness to Swedenborg's discovery that "the surface of the brain is in connection through nerve fibers with every part of the body," and he even assigned the primary function of nervous control to what are now called "neurons"—tiny oval cells in the gray matter of the brain. Swedenborg's science, of course, was not infallible. He made mistakes. But what is extraordinary in his work is its *philosophical* as well as its physiological anticipation of the directions inquiry would take generations and even centuries later. And, as Miss Toksvig says, today Swedenborg's speculations on the nature of the interaction between soul and body are far from out of date.

The author is able to match many of Swedenborg's most interesting suggestions on this question with parallel passages from investigators of our own time. The thinking of Driesch, Gardner Murphy, Stromberg, Schrödinger and others has transformed Emanuel Swedenborg from a forgotten mystic and eccentric of religion into a daring pioneer in the field of psychobiology. *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* is much more than a series of happy guesses—it is the product of the concentration of an original and intuitive mind on a question that only bigots and the most dogmatic materialists can ignore, and discussed with unusual scientific conscientiousness and a profound regard for all the facts that Swedenborg could collect.

He ended, it is true, with a "system," in which it would no doubt be possible to find numerous faults. But the spirit of his inquiry and the suggestiveness of his thinking never suffer from his mistakes. The latter portion of the book is devoted to a general metaphysical and ethical theory of the soul. At the outset of this undertaking, he wrote:

> . . . no sooner did I seem to have mastered the subject than I found it again eluding my grasp, though it never absolutely disappeared from view. Thus my hopes were not destroyed, but deferred; and I frequently reproached myself with stupidity in being ignorant of that which was everywhere most really present to me; 'since by reason of the soul it is that we hear, see, feel, perceive, remember, imagine, think, desire, will; or that we are, move and live.

Swedenborg, in this prefatory observation, acknowledges the difficulty which accompanies all efforts at self-knowledge. Yet how different, in both spirit and fruit, are his words from the opposite judgment, based on exactly the same subjective experience, of David Hume, who, describing this "elusiveness" of the self, thereupon concluded that it must be a complete chimera, without any real existence at all! Hume, more than any other man, made barren the field of psychology for centuries of academic science, while Swedenborg, had he been listened to, might have pointed the way to genuine discovery.

Miss Toksvig, fortunately, tells the story of Swedenborg's life and work with simplicity and respect, She does not venture a psychoanalytical formula to explains him away. She is willing to present him as impartially as she can, leaving it to the reader to determine how Swedenborg is to be "explained," if at all, by any of the current theories of human nature. She makes numerous helpful suggestions, setting the cultural stage for an understanding of the time in which he lived, but beyond this, she allows Swedenborg to speak for himself. This is a pattern of biography not too popular these days, but one which makes Miss Toksvig's book worth careful reading—something which can be said of very few new books.