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STATUS

OCCASIONALLY a friendly correspondent takes MANAS to task for having "heroes," suggesting that some of the individuals we have admired have had their less-than-admirable moments. This we freely admit, but shall nevertheless continue to choose examples from history and biography that, to our way of thinking, illustrate qualities worth emulation by any of us. Take the feeling and practice of human equality. It is an elusive element in the relationships of men, difficult to define in generally acceptable terms, and yet, without any particular effort, we think at once of Clarence Darrow and Eugene V. Debs. Again, we suggest the reading of Irving Stone's books on these men, and call attention to the just published edition of Debs' writings and speeches. For we know of no greater equalitarians than Darrow and Debs.

A judgment of this sort has nothing to do with the political doctrines of the one nor the mechanist theories of the other. We have in mind the characteristic attitudes of both toward other human beings. Neither Darrow or Debs *used* men or thought of them as anything else than ends in themselves. This view of their fellows was a fundamental trait of character in both; they had the habit of regarding other men, not as lawyers, bankers, store-keepers, firemen, Negroes, laborers, criminals or drunkards, but, first and last, as human beings. They were oblivious to status in their regard for man.

One's attitude toward status is an acid test of character. A person who will slight the office boy while paying elaborate attention to his employer would as easily live in the grand manner on the proceeds of fire-trap tenement rentals: for him, people are tools, mere stepping-stones to private ambition. A more pitiable form of the worship of status occurs in the man who is ashamed to do work that is "beneath" him, or for whom his name on the door or in the daily newspaper is a mark of enviable distinction. Such a man will tend to be servile in the presence of wealth, arrogant to those he regards as "poor," and he will anxiously determine the degree of courtesy to be accorded the persons whom he meets. A like defect mars the existence of the spiritual climber—the one who cherishes the sunshine of proximity to those presumed to have religious status, and is sharp or casual to the followers at the fringe.

These traits, of course, represent forms of neurotic self-deprecation and insecurity. Sometimes they are social in origin, and can be corrected by education, but as often they seem to have roots deeper than any sort of external conditioning and resist change like a man fighting for his life. The social imprint is illustrated by the Georgia cracker who explained, "I was fo'teen yeahs ole before I knowed I was any better than a Negro." He accepted this judgment from his "betters," and would as easily change again to conform to another social environment.

The problem for the individual is to overcome in himself all such habits of mind, derived from the social milieu. The story is told of Count Tolstoy that, dressed in his peasant garb, he visited a Government bureau in a town nearby to his estate, accompanied by two small peasant children. He had come to obtain some permit, ticket, or other official service, for an activity which the children were to enjoy with him. The man at the window, seeing only a peasant, was tardy and insolent, whereupon Tolstoy, drawing himself up to the full stature of a landed nobleman, thundered, "Do you know who I am?"

But Tolstoy, unlike other men who burst with the indignation of outraged status, was suddenly filled with shame. He had given way to an emotion signifying precisely the reverse of what

he believed in, and he went home a wiser and soberer man.

A similar tale is told of Plato. A friend called to see him one day and found the philosopher standing motionless, with arm upraised. Asked what he was doing, Plato replied, "I am punishing an angry man," and he remained in that position for a long period. It developed that he had been at the point of striking a servant, but stopped himself in time.

Reliance on status is the opposite of equality in human relations. The man who longs to reveal, casually, to the traffic policeman about to give him a ticket that he is on intimate terms with the Mayor and the chief of police does not really believe in equality. For the moment, he is like the righteous sectarian who would enjoy whispering in Jehovah's ear which of his enemies to strike dead. The man whose theory of personal progress depends upon gaining "influential" connections is probably a man who will lie any time it suits him and judge all men according to their usefulness to himself.

Periodically, throughout history, men have revolted against the oppressions and pretentions of status. Both the name and the plain garb of the Puritans developed, in the early seventeenth century, from the hatred of the dissenters for ostentatious display of luxury on the part of the dignitaries of the new Church of England established by Henry VIII. The refusal, a generation later, of the Quakers to remove their hats in the presence of "quality" folk was a similar attack on the tradition of status. All men are equal, they said, in the sight of God. But in time, even customs established in the spirit of equality are themselves made over into marks of status, are turned against the principle of their origin. This is illustrated by the use of honorifics in common speech. It is quite difficult to use certain words and phrases, today, without conveying unwanted under- or overtones of disapprobation or distinction. To say "working classes," for example, carries a slightly snobbish air, while "workers," used frequently and in the right connections, generates a kind of proletarian sanctity, implying that those who never get their hands dirty are a breed of useless parasites. All such partisan traditions are in opposition to human equality.

Today, a consciously aggressive attack on status in human relations is being carried on by the Paris Existentialists. We have no intention of attempting an explanation of the somewhat nihilistic implications of the *Existenz* analysis of human life. Its view of status, however, is to the point. According to Hannah Arendt (*Nation*, Feb. 23, 1946) the Existentialists reject entirely what they call the *esprit serieux*, which means, as we understand it, an unnatural regard for any form of social or economic status. Miss Arendt writes:

> *L'esprit serieux*, which is the original sin according to the new philosophy, may be equated with respectability. The "serious" man is one who thinks of himself *as* president of his business, *as* a member of the Legion of Honor, *as* a member of the faculty, but also *as* father, *as* husband, or as any other half-natural, half-social function. For by so doing he agrees to the identification of himself with an arbitrary function which society has bestowed. *L'esprit serieux* is the very negation of freedom, because it leads man to agree to and accept the necessary deformation which every human being must undergo when he is fitted into society. Since everyone knows well enough in his own heart that he is not identical with his functions, *l'esprit serieux* indicates also bad faith in the sense of pretending.

No man, surely, would want to be identified with his "function," unless he felt himself inadequate simply as a man. And it is here, finally, that all the violations of human equality and the pretensions of status must be traced to their origin. Men oppress and lord it over other men because they despise themselves—because their own manhood is not enough to provide them with a sense of personal dignity. They seek a supplementary "self" in position, in things, and in all the objectives that men strive after which are less than knowledge and less than understanding. That is why, when we discover men like Darrow

and Debs, whose self-reverence, however unconscious, made them capable of reverence for the selves in all others, we speak of them with almost unqualified admiration: such men are very few.

So, in the last analysis, the problem comes back to the idea of the self—or, in an expression far from new, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." But the bare ethical judgment that men should treat one another as ends-in-themselves, as "equals," that is, is not enough. The Existentialist criticism is correct, but it is only a criticism. A philosophy of the Self, to endure and to be adaptable to the infinite varieties of human experience, must provide a universal content; it must have a spiritual center in the immortal human essence and a radius of moral connectedness with the entire human race. It must be, in short, a religion of solidarity with a transcendental ground. Further, it must offer some reasonable explanation for the differences among men, for it is through the misapprehension of human differences that all dogmas of status obtain their apparently logical justification. No doctrine of equality can survive a denial of the manifest differences in character and capacity which set men apart, one from the other. An intelligent account of what is different and what is the same in human beings is the first necessity of social philosophy, and the failure to provide it lies at the root of the disasters which have overtaken every revolutionary and reform movement of Western history. The same failure is responsible for the corruption of religious emotion into support for totalitarian theories of government and their attempts to institute, by violence and terror, either a false order of equality or a false order of status. (In reality, both are always present.) Just as in a primer on psychiatry, the reader can find developed in an abnormal degree most of his own personal idiosyncrasies, so, in the massive social formations of the age, he can recognize his own weak reliances on status and his petty bastions of security writ large in the institutions from which, all over the world, the common man is struggling to be free.

Letter from
ITALY

NAPLES.—One of the characteristics of the Italian determination to find a new manner of life is found in philosophical interests. Two currents are discernible: the idealistic and the realistic. The idealistic movement is headed by Benedetto Croce, now 82 years old, but to this day vigorous and aggressive. Croce is a son of the nineteenth century: imbued with Hegelian idealism, he is penetrated by the cult of liberty. This intellectual development of Croce accompanied the rise of Italy's political and national power. When Rome became the capital of Italy he was four years old. Throughout his life, he has given his best capacities to strengthen the idealistic interpretation of history and culture, opposing Ardigo's positivism and Marx's materialism. Croce was strongly affected by the works of Goethe and, generally, by the German spirit. When, in 1915, Italy declared war against Austria and Germany, Croce was flatly philo-German. After World War I, he at first saw with sympathy the origin of Fascism; like many other intellectuals, he had the best hopes. Fascism might stop the spread of Communism. But Croce soon recognized the real temper of Fascism, and after the murder of the socialist deputy, Matteotti, Croce became the spiritual leader of anti-Fascism. His home was devastated by a fascist mob and Mussolini and his accomplices often ridiculed the *"professore"* Croce as a ruminator of history and dead culture.

Croce, to whom Italy's youth owes the highest and purest inspiration and suggestions, has in recent years seen his best followers deviate from his idealistic line and abandon the liberal party, which for fifty years had played so large a part in the life of Italy. Two of his friends, Guido de Ruggiero and Adolfo Omodeo, followed their own ways soon after the fall of Fascism. Guido de Ruggiero, whose history of European liberalism yielded him imprisonment and persecution, is a strong fighter for liberal and republican ideals, while Croce has never concealed his sympathy for the monarchy. [Croce's social philosophy is embodied in a recent essay, *Politics and Morals*, published in English.] Adolfo Omodeo, who died two years ago, was minister of education under Badoglio. Previously, he had had much trouble with the fascist police, as he was an energetic and ruthless foe of the King, whom he attacked on every occasion. Omodeo's very interesting books about Jesus Christ, the Age of Apostles, and St. Paul, brought down on him the wrath of Catholic circles. As Rector of the University of Naples, he conferred on General Mark W. Clark, the liberator of Naples, the degree of Doctor *Honoris Causa*.

The "leftist" philosophers are principally materialists. Chief among them was the founder of Italy's Communist Party, Antonio Gramsci, who died in jail of tuberculosis after having been for eleven years a guest of fascist prisons. Their philosophy is Marxist, Leninist, Stalinist. Gramsci's *Lettere dal Carcere* (Letters from Jail) brought the highest price a year ago. Gramsci was a serious thinker who owed many ideas to Croce, and Croce himself recognizes the integrity and rigor of Gramsci's system. Many of the materialistic thinkers are not primarily philosophers; they are sometimes scholars of physics or chemistry, and often mathematicians.

Now that Italy is governed by a Catholic party, the "philosophy" of Neo-Thomism emerges once more, in its stronghold, the University of Sacre Coeur in Milan, and in the magazine, *Catholic Civilization*. It is very hard to read this magazine with edification: it is almost entirely a mishmash of superstition, politics, and irony with unction, the articles always ending with a panegyric to the Pope.

Generally speaking, we miss in Italy, the home of St. Francis and Machiavelli, the philosophy of the highest ideals of humanity: the philosophy which includes as fundamental ideas, the principles of freedom and peace.

ITALIAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
MONOPOLY

FOR some months, now, this Department has been engaged in a program of "outside reading" which, in retrospect, turns out to have a central theme running through various volumes, articles and reports. The theme is Monopoly—a subject which, apparently, you can start investigating almost anywhere in history. In eighteenth-century England, for example, a chapter in the story of monopoly tells how the freeholders and cottagers were dispossessed of their landrights by a series of parliamentary acts called the "Enclosures," creating, finally, a landless proletariat and destroying the ancient pattern of village life in England. A reading of *The Village Labourer* by J. L. and Barbara Hammond does much to confirm the view of Albert Jay Nock that the degrading and brutalizing conditions of English factories in the early days of the Industrial Revolution were not so much due to the innate viciousness of the rising class of manufacturers as to the fact that the Enclosure Acts had taken away the alternative of the poor to work on the land—they *had* to work in the factories or starve.

There are, it seems, a number of social historians who contend that "in the long run" the Enclosure Acts were a good thing because they made possible the introduction of modern methods of agriculture, a thing impossible under the old feudal system of land tenure. Sir Albert Howard, founder of the organic gardening movement, probably had something to say on this point, and even if modern agriculture were all it is claimed to be, the fact remains that the enclosure of the English Commons was one long swindle of the poor by the rich, engineered through an arrogant and partisan Parliament which took only nominal cognizance of the rights of the yeomanry. Unlike some treatises of economic history, the Hammonds' study is rich and colorful reading. One learns, for example, that the parsimonious and canting Brocklehurst, in *Jane Eyre*, was modeled after an original who participated in hearings on the Enclosure Acts, showing as much sympathy for England's small farmers as Brocklehurst expressed for the orphaned charges at Lowood School in Charlotte Bronte's sad romance.

Reading the Hammonds and Max Beer's *History of Socialism in England*, one gains a deep sense of participation in the human struggle for freedom. It is almost necessary to have this background for an understanding of the ardors of nineteenth-century socialism, and to appreciate the inspiration which has been behind such movements in England as the Independent Labour Party (not the labor party now in power), of which Keir Hardie, Fenner Brockway and Bob Edwards have been representative men. (Within the year, the ILP has retired from politics, to remain active in only its educational functions.)

In the twentieth century, the emphasis changes from land monopoly to industrial monopoly. The latter is the subject of a recent book, *Chemicals, Servant or Master?* by Bob Edwards, published by the National Labor Press in London. Mr. Edwards is assistant General Secretary of the Chemical Workers' Union and unquestionably an expert on the subject of the chemical industries in England and elsewhere. His book is principally an analysis of the fabulous industrial empire of ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries), with special attention to *(a)* the technical backwardness encouraged by monopoly control, *(b)* the frustration of "free enterprise" by the combined power of government and industry, and *(c)* the cartel arrangements of ICI with similar organizations in other countries. On this last point, Mr. Edwards writes:

> By means of a whole network of cartel agreements, three huge monopolies—British I.C.I., American Du Ponts and German Farbinindustrie—between the two wars virtually controlled the vital chemical wealth of the world. The consequences of such control over chemicals, which are among the raw materials essential to the very existence of great basic industries like engineering, textiles, aircraft and

> rubber, are that unprecedented world power is placed in the hands of a few business men who can dictate policies affecting war and peace and the destinies of millions of industrial workers in many parts of the world.

Mr. Edwards pictures in simple language the history, structure and almost unimaginable extent of Britain's chemical monopoly. He knows his subject from the inside out and his book is more satisfying than most on this formidable subject. In his campaign for government ownership of the means of production, however, he is occasionally trapped by his own logic. In condemning the wasteful and sluggish methods of the British chemical monopoly, he resorts to a comparison with American industry, which, as he tell it, is far and away the more "progressive" and resourceful, but he permits such comparisons to follow close upon an advocacy of socialism to correct monopolistic inefficiency. The argument, therefore, is hardly pertinent, and we shall have to see what changes British socialism introduces to attain to the ideal Mr. Edwards advocates. So far, we remain unpersuaded that the all-powerful state will be any great improvement over not-quite-all-powerful monopolistic private industry; on the contrary, the liking of the emotional force of "patriotism" with the pattern of conformity to government-dictated economic policies seems potentially more threatening than even the obviously amoral cartels described in this book. It is still monopoly, and we have come to suspect any form of *absolute* power. Conceivably, the identification of political power as the sole important means to social betterment will turn out to be the basic fallacy of nineteenth-century thinking, a fallacy to be thoroughly exposed only by future generations.

Next on our list is Thomas Hewes' *Decentralize for Freedom* (Dutton). This is a good book founded on economic realities by a man with some experience in government (in the State of Connecticut), although we had hoped, from the title, for something a little different. Briefly, Mr. Hewes is for limiting business to a single type of operation. He is against the vertical control of an entire industry by one ownership. The Supreme Court, for instance, when it ruled last May that the motion picture producers could not discriminate against independent theaters in the matter of playing dates for first-run pictures, supported the Hewes thesis. He is for co-ops, more home-ownership, and offers a generalized plan of reform, through legislation, which you will have to read for yourself; simple though the latter is, we have not the space to try to explain it. What we like about the Hewes book is the evident fact that its author, a man of much practical competence, can undoubtedly make himself all the money he wants under the present system, but nevertheless chooses to devote himself to the basis conceptions of economic reform. Of course, it is an open question whether or not it is possible to introduce such radical changes by means of legislation—to do it, and retain, that is, the freedom with which Mr. Hewes is principally concerned.

Besides illustrating one of Mr. Hewes' points, another Supreme Court decision questioning producer ownership of move theaters interested us in our character as impotent victims of Hollywood's immeasurable capacity to produce and to market bad films. We had hoped that the decision would have some important effect on the abuse known as "block-booking"—the system by which the independent theater-owner is obliged to contract for pictures in "wholesale" lots, taking the bad with the poor and the occasionally worthwhile film. The practical effect of block-booking is to make it difficult for the individual exhibitor to eliminate at will a picture he dislikes, or thinks his audience will not like, and to make it virtually impossible for a small producer to start up and market his pictures through an independent distributing organization. The independent theater-owners are all tied up with block-booking contracts involving "play or pay" clauses, and they are not in a position to buy from an independent producer, supposing they should want to.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court decision will probably not materially affect this situation.

In order to be sure of our facts on this subject—and we're not absolutely positive about anything, yet—we wearily read through about a third of the House Committee Hearings in 1940 on S. 280, known as the Neely Bill, comprising, in all, over 1100 pages of Government Printing Office type. The witnesses range all the way from Mrs. Shaver who runs a little theater in Shavertown, Pennsylvania, to Don Ameche, whose amiable countenance has made some very bad films at least tolerable. Studying the Record, we learned, among other things, about all the pictures a certain Congressman wouldn't want his son to see. As to block-booking, Mrs. Shaver was pretty sick of it—especially of the cruel letters she got from producers insisting that she play pictures she didn't want—and Mr. Ameche attempted to brighten the humdrum lives of the Committeemen by describing artistic freedom of movie-making, which, he claimed, a clause in the Neely Bill threatened to stifle and suppress. Pressed on block-booking itself, he replied:

> . . . . I am speaking . . . strictly from the viewpoint of the actor because I know nothing about block-booking or blind selling or the rest of those things. They do not mean anything to me. As a matter of fact, I have plenty of work in pictures and radio work so that I have enough to take care of, without going around and putting my nose into somebody else's business.

The impression grows, from reading a record of this sort, that a principle is seldom at stake in a Congressional Hearing; that the reason the issue of monopoly is so befogged in all such investigations is that the hearings represent a contest of special interests, and that the presence of "right" on either side is something of a historical accident. At any rate, it seems unlikely that any real victory for human freedom can be won in the national legislature, these days, although possibly the Congress might *confirm* a public attitude of mind in which moral determination was represented.

Fundamentally, we think, monopolistic practices represent the tendency in human nature to try to get something for nothing at the expense of other human beings. It seems probable that the victims of monopoly are as likely to express this tendency, when they get the chance, as their cleverer exploiters. If the people of America really wanted better films, they would stay away from the pictures now being shown until the producers' monopoly was broken. A similar policy would soon transform the commercial press and the radio, and a refusal to buy the countless knick-knacks, cheap finery and other useless articles offered for sale in the stores could deal a death-blow to the insane profit psychology which has corrupted the outlook of industry and trade.

A study of the problem of monopoly brings the conviction that, over a long period, monopolies can take advantage of only those people who are themselves monopolists at heart. There are instances, of course, in which monopolists operate with absolute power, armed by the State, and when their injustices stand out clear and distinct against the contrasting helplessness of derided and dispossessed men. The small farmers of England who were robbed of their right to gain a precarious living from the land provide one such instance. And all human beings ground down by economic or political tyranny, without an alternative except to submit or starve—these are the people who should command our sympathy, our continuing interest and our practical support. But, for the long view, we need to see that a world without monopoly will have to be, first, a world which prizes moral goods above material goods; in other words, a world populated by people who understand the nature of human freedom and are willing to practice the principles which make men free.

COMMENTARY
CORRESPONDENCE

MANAS owes many of the ideas for its articles and reviews to suggestions from subscribers, some of whom, by writing us regularly, have constituted themselves "contributing editors," providing tangible help in perspective and construction criticism. One such reader, a friend who writes from Pennsylvania, has recently set down so thoughtful and suggestive a series of comments that it seems appropriate to print this letter in the space usually reserved for the editorial.

* * *

DEAR MANAS: . . . "Why Men Strike" should be read by every "good" employer. My father was the fatherly—rather than paternalistic—employer of about 100 people. While he had no serious troubles with them, there were occasional hurt feelings which early got me to thinking on both sides of the employment fence. I have often thought one of the most flagrant arrogances of employers was to bring people long distances through congested traffic to the plant gates, there to be told whether or not work was to be had. Yet an employer as apparently careful as du Pont of the letter of contracts, and who (like myself in theory, at least) would like to see labor leaders held to responsible action, fails to see any violation in this of the spirit in which valid contracts should be made. Another point in my mind, of the sort I have so frequently seen in print for the first time in MANAS, deals with the class-distinction between clock-punchers and the rest of humanity. This, to my observation, is as valid a class-distinction as nearly all such distinctions in Europe, yet do you read about it in labor papers or hear a single labor-leader shouting for its abolition? . . . .

I am bursting at the seams, myself, with ideas on psychiatry, but dare not indulge them. However (referring to "A Psychiatric Contribution"), on the clash between moralism and psychology, I suggest that the latter contains within itself (subtly avoiding any pinning down) an effect equivalent to the "soul," without making in so many words such a drastic assumption as the "soul" may appear to some to be. Most psychiatric pronouncements, on the surface, rule out not only any validity in moral judgment, but even the possibility of conscious training and attainment; yet, I think, in the last, even psychiatrists may discern some contradiction between their own activity and the conclusions to which it leads.

Physics is certainly an analogous situation. By defining its scope as its most eminent professors, notably Einstein, have done, it becomes merely a maze of hypotheses for guiding further experimentation. Even though the process leads to tangible "results," the physicists find they have voluntarily abdicated the right so prized—albeit unconsciously—by their classic predecessors, of pontificating on the destiny of the universe, and mankind and human problems in general. Somewhere under all this lie contradictions of purpose and meaning, no less devastating because more profound, than the conspicuous inconsistencies of other citizens. Many physicists are more or less dimly aware that they exist. If the psychiatrists relaxed their grim objectivity a bit (and after all, "objectivity" is as much a routine as a demonstrable procedure), some of their dicta might have a far more savory quality. If they would put into their interpretations that which the existence of their writings proves they are granting themselves—namely, the provisional assumption, at least, of will and purpose—then many of the interpretations would follow equally well from the kindly "common sense" of past generations. For instance: "I was disparaged as a child, so I tried to disparage others, and I disparage myself" becomes, "The standards I first learned as a child were critical ones, so I have consciously cultivated high standards. I have probably gone so far that I am out of tune with my environment and my times. Sometimes I disparage out of professional habit. Maybe I am just a failure because I tried

too much, unlike a 'successful' leader. Perhaps, as a sourpuss, I am more harm than good, but at least I am trying, according to my lights." And does any Napoleon, Einstein or future president *try* in any more valid sense? For the psychiatrist, the one complex of actions in which will and purpose are valid are those conceived at college age in the minds of individuals who are later to graduate with degrees in psychology. There is the same tendency to go blind at the portals of one's science (or rather, make a new set of rules, if, indeed, it is possible to live all of life under one set of rules) as at the gate to one's livelihood. Here, then is a big loophole in all materialistic philosophy—in one form or another this wide-open barn door has existed and has been periodically ignored since before Plato. (Please note I said nothing against the immediate "validity" or "value" of psychology which would not apply equally well to physics or chemistry.) We have a vast dissatisfaction with this inability to validate finally *any* philosophy; in the meantime, let us not tacitly accept the materialistic and opportunistic brand because we fondly imagine that it at least reflects the animal creation . . .

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The foregoing letter continues with a discussion of revolutions and the circumstances of their origin; this subject, however, may be made the basis for an independent discussion in some future issue.

We have been endeavoring for some months past to locate a prospective correspondent who would contribute a "Letter from China." Finally, at the suggestion of a friend, we wrote to a Chinese presently engaged in one of the larger universities on the Pacific Coast, asking his help. His reply, while not promising with regard to finding a Chinese correspondent, should be of general interest.

* * *

. . . I shall be glad to try my very best to help you . . . . The difficulty is that I have left China for over a year, and much change has taken place since then. The past year has been a period of chaos of such a degree that has never been experienced by any Chinese students before. I have lost connection with all my old schoolmates, but gathering from here and there, now and then, things seem to have gone to extremes, and students are living in moments of suspense. In Peiping, especially, students' activities of any sort are absolutely suppressed, and what you have described in your paper of July 14 is only one of hundreds of those cases—some students simply "vanish." They might be very much discouraged by now, or scared, or threatened to keep quiet—I don't know. I will try to . . . inquire about the actual situation and see if there is any way of establishing a connection between here and there so as to provide you with a Chinese correspondent. I will let you know at once as soon as I hear from any one of them (if any words could ever reach this side of the world) . . .

CHILDREN
. . . AND OURSELVES

THE average man probably gets some sort of feeling about the meaning of the terms psychiatry uses in describing behavior-disorders and the general direction of "the new science" from the constant references made in motion-pictures, cartoons and comic strips. There is, of course, danger that we may, despite this superficial familiarity, think that psychiatry is something entirely beyond our own natural interest, for we, the public, have reacted this way to other sciences before this. Yet the opinions of psychiatrists have much to do with molding our teacher-training courses in the universities, much to do with the popular text-books on child-psychology. It is our business, especially if we be parents, to form our opinions of the possible usefulness of developments in the psychiatric field to home education.

The most beneficial influence of the scores of recently published volumes on psychiatry has been their insistence on the close kinship between the shifting mental states of "normal" people and the plight of the mentally ill. Warden Lawes once contributed a similar thesis by arguing persuasively that there is very little difference in emotional structure between the majority of men within and those without prison walls. And the Lord Buddha, who "made all Asia mild," is said to have voiced the same sentiment 2500 years ago: "I am as all these men who cry upon their gods and are not heard."

Last week we suggested that even children are susceptible to "manic-depressive" cycles. It may be profitable to investigate further the social and family influences capable of accentuating such abnormal tendencies. There are indications that a new science of "social psychology" may some day arise, but at present it remains for each educator to correlate, for himself, the particular findings of psychiatric research with the emotional distortions represented in commonly accepted social habits.

Many Hollywood films, to please the customers, transport them from the depths of a seemingly hopeless despair to the heights of triumphant achievement. The successful scenario is constructed upon the psychological appeal of extremes is human experience, *i.e.,* the man without a cent or a friend suddenly strikes it rich in both departments, presumably because he has some vague quality called "goodness of heart" or is a "straight-shooter." On occasion, this theme is unobjectionable, but the usual technique of portrayal subjects motion picture audiences to violent and rapid changes of emotional polarity. In another manner, murder mysteries jerk the audience's attention from the sordid brutality of a killing to an intense energization of noble endeavor as inspired in the hero or heroine. Our streamlined fiction plots follow a similar pattern. And it is from exposure to emotional extremes as well as from constitutional susceptibility that one may logically be expected to develop premonitory manic-depressive symptoms.

A day at the races may have a similar effect upon parents, and indirectly upon their children. The horse player spends his days in alternation between extreme elation and inconsolable woe, as he wins or loses. A few complications of personal life—a collection of friends who praise or please, and then betray—and the habitual move-goer or racetrack follower moves closer to the manic-depressive cycle. It should not be difficult to see where the problem of educating the young enters into the thesis here being developed. We are assuming, justifiably, we think, that the emotional structure of the child is seriously affected by the psychological states of adults. The child whose world centers in his parents cannot help but be influenced by the moods of the latter. He reads the comic books, he listens to the radio serials and he also attends the movies. The child who manages to develop any real emotional stability in our culture is an incipient genius, for all the odds are against him.

Our argument issues, of course, in a fresh set of reasons for the familiar idea that parents and children should not go to too many movies, nor read too many comic strips and highly dramatized novels. These are not the foods of normality. Yet the spartan avoidance of such pastimes can be successful only as the precise psychological reasons for discontinuance are clearly understood. The kill-joy sort of objection to films of the type described will not necessarily avert the "manic-depressive" tendency, for these "cultural" manifestations are not alone to blame. As a matter of fact, they exist because the present state of our emotions leads us to seek justification and amplification of our own attitudes in popular dramatization. And a person can gain psycho-neurotic distinction without ever attending a motion picture or visiting Santa Anita or Belmont.

Many parents use the device of promising something especially exciting in order to secure the child's obedience for a few days. A trip to the circus, the beach or the movies is given high emotional status. When the event actually occurs, it cannot possibly measure up to the extreme representation given it by parents, nor to the spectacular expectations of the child. The reality becomes a little dull, and surcease from depression is to be found only in the creation of another distortion of reality, another "exciting" time ahead.

Here, perhaps, we stumble upon one of the basic secrets of emotional stability. It seems that unless we are able to take our pleasures as a matter of course, we can never learn to take our reverses in a similar fashion. One reason for our occasional references to Eastern psychology is that the older and in many ways wiser civilization of India seems to know this well. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, India's "New Testament," a Christ of five thousand years ago advises his disciple to "make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat the same and then prepare for battle." Our battle is for our children's sanity and for our own, but it is the same struggle as that encountered by the Asiatic disciple, and it will be won only by "equal-mindedness."

FRONTIERS

A DARING PSYCHIATRIST

THE spreading acceptance of telepathy in scientific circles is like the slow, unostentatious rise of the tide on a calm summer day. Each wave of interest penetrates a little further, undermining a little more of the superficial formations of skepticism which for years have shaped the denials of the scientific fraternity. It is of considerable importance that now, at least, even the psychiatrists are beginning to admit the possibility of thought-transference. Scientists working in fields not allied to study of the mind have presented far less objection than psychologists to the hypothesis of extra-sensory perception, probably because their ideas about the mind are not organized into some scholastic theory of interpretation, making them able to recognize facts which a dogmatic psychologist will either disregard or savagely attack as threatening the foundations of his science. Except for the early efforts of William McDougall, who inaugurated the research at Duke University, the pioneering of extra-sensory perception was carried on largely by workers outside the pale of academic psychology, with almost nothing but sneers and ridicule from their "respectable' scientific brethren. That William James, sometimes called the founder of modern psychology in the United States, was quite convinced of the reality of supernormal mental phenomena impressed the next generation of psychologists not at all.

The same callow indifference to evidence for telepathy has been typical of a generation of psychoanalysts. While the proud sectarianism of the Freudian school is well known, critics have less frequently called attention to the unwarranted conceit that psychoanalytical theories concerning the psychic and dream life of human beings represent the only truly scientific approach to psychological problems—probably because the delusion that "modern" ideas are alone free from superstition is shared as much by the critics as by the friends of psychoanalysis. In this connection, *The Dream World*, by R. L. Megroz, is well worth a careful reading, as showing the extreme provincialism of all schools of modern psychology and psychoanalysis which ignore the facts of extra-sensory perception. For example, in reviewing Dr. J. S. Lincoln's *The Dream in Primitive Culture*, Megroz points out this Freudian's neglect of matters which no impartial psychologist should overlook:

> Dr. Lincoln . . . examines the dreams of Navaho Indians, and their ceremonies, and finds the evidence he wants in support of the Freudian theory of an Oedipus complex, but does not comment upon the fact that nine of the collected dreams were prophetic . . . . Some . . . anticipated a coming disaster such as an uncommon storm or a serious epidemic causing many deaths. Others foretold the death of a relative. . . .
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> Our modern psychologists bring Freudian analysis to bear upon the study of the savage mind and culture, without recognizing the philosophical problem of prevision. When this psychoanalytical vein begins to exhaust in anthropology, perhaps psychologically-minded anthropologists will begin to re-examine the evidence for light on the mysteries of supernormally acquired knowledge.

Whether or not any anthropologists are as yet persuaded of the reality of the supernormal, we cannot say, but it is evident from a recent article by Signe Toksvig in the Saturday Review of Literature that at least one contemporary psychiatrist has reached a point in his investigations where he can no longer ignore the fact of telepathy. Miss Toksvig notes particularly the "stubborn honesty" of this psychiatrist, Dr. Jan Ehrenwald, late of the universities of Prague and Vienna, and now associate in psychiatry at the Long Island College of Medicine. Apparently, Dr. Ehrenwald has been impressed by the tendency of patients to have dreams "in accordance with unconscious wishes and expectations of the respective analysts"—a somewhat devastating possibility for conventional psychoanalytical diagnosis. Admitting the fact—Dr. Ehrenwald reports that he and a small group of colleagues have studied "telepathy and related phenomena" and "have furnished incontrovertible evidence

which prove their existence"—this psychiatrist turns his new-found conviction into a tool of scientific investigation. Paranoia, he suggests, or its seeds in "unconscious aggressive tendencies," may be telepathically communicated from one person to another, which would help to explain the phenomenon of a "trend" in paranoiac behavior. Here, obviously, lies an important clue to the origin of crime waves attended by psychopathic symptoms, and a fundamental principle with which to begin, afresh, the study of psychology of crowds. Puzzling mass obsessions such as the medieval Dancing Mania, the Tulip Craze in Holland and the Mississippi Land Bubble may now be capable of scientific analysis, not to mention the all-pervasive insanity of war, and, indeed, any of the institutional delusions of modern civilization.

It is only a step, from the far-reaching proposals of Dr. Ehrenwald, to the metaphysical view that mankind exists in a vast continuum of thought and feeling—a sub-lunary psychic sphere subject to mental and emotional tides which constantly affect human beings according to their individual attractions and susceptibilities. Why not? By this hypothesis, the strange phenomena of spiritualism would have at least the beginnings of an explanation, and ancient beliefs concerning prophecy, oracular utterance, mantic ecstasy and poetic inspiration would all fit into a context of rational theory.

We join with Miss Toksvig in approving the "stubborn honesty" of Dr. Ehrenwald.