

FLIGHT INTO LIFE

THERE is a legend, known throughout the East, that Genghis Khan, the great Mongolian conqueror of the twelfth century, will rise again—miraculously, some say, from his tomb somewhere in Tartary, or by rebirth into a new body supplied by the descendants of his people of the Mongolian steppes—and again lead the Asiatic hordes to triumph and victory. The story of the mighty Khan's military exploits is only a little less incredible than this prophecy, so that it is easy to understand how people who have no difficulty in accepting the rich supernaturalism of the Lamaist religion may take for granted the return of their hero and historic leader.

What is of particular interest, today, is that a talented American novelist, James Ramsey Ullman, author of *The White Tower*, has chosen the theme of Genghis Khan's rebirth as the basis for a rather remarkable book. The desert where the Mongolian empire of Genghis once had its capital is called Karakorum. It lies to the north of the Gobi, and south of the Siberian forests. From this base the Khan led his forays over an area stretching from Eastern Europe to the Pacific. It is now a desolate ruin, surrounded by black sands (the meaning of Karakorum), shunned by the superstitious Mongolian tribes as inhabited by evil spirits who want no visitors to their dark empire of loneliness. The winds blow continually, with weird, haunting sound.

Ullman's book, *The Sands of Karakorum* (Lippincott, 1953), is fundamentally a religious story. A reporter unfolds the tale, but the protagonist is an American missionary to China who is driven to search for the birth-place of the reincarnated Genghis by an inner torment which gives him no peace. The missionary, John Bickel, became a minister after killing an opposing player in a football game. He hoped by undertaking a religious life and working for the Chinese peasants of the inland provinces to discover his salvation. He also seeks the truth which lies behind doctrine, and to this end he studies the great religions of the Orient. When the communists take over China, Bickel remains in the interior. Then, after the brutal murder of his daughter by a gang composed of men he

has befriended, he cuts all ties with the West, setting out for Karakorum with a caravan of lames bent on the same mission. They seek the returning Genghis.

The idea of the rebirth of the ruthless conqueror is set off against the account of another Asiatic belief—a cardinal doctrine of Tibetan Buddhism. It is that since the time of the great Buddhist reformer, Tsong ka pa, the ruling lames of Tibet have been themselves incarnations of Gautama Buddha, or embody a portion of the Buddha's nature and influence. This is not a teaching wholly unfamiliar in the West. The "discovery" of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas by monks searching an infant marked with the identifying signs, and who responds with recognition of its destiny when confronted with the symbols of high religious office, has been amply described by journalists and in magazine articles and books. Writing of the present Dalai Lama, then eleven years old, who is the temporal head of the Tibetan theocratic State, Sir Basil Gould said in the *Geographical Magazine* (British) for October, 1946:

What has struck me most about the Dalai Lama both at the time of his Installation and when I again visited Lhasa four years later is the affection which he radiates and inspires. In his presence no one can fail to be happy. And even, body wants to serve him. If there is a children's party at the British Mission, his brothers and sister-in-law save up crackers and balloons and toys to take home to him. He has a smile which is a joy. Like his predecessor, he loves animals and flowers. . . . When I met him in 1940, the Dalai Lama—a five-year-old child—showed every sign of delight as if he were welcoming an old friend. Tibetan officials gravely assured me that there was nothing remarkable in this. After all, they said, he had met me 28 years before. In 1912 I met the old Dalai Lama, of whom this child is believed to be the reincarnation. Naturally, the Tibetans told me, he remembered me well.

For millions in the East, the periodic rebirth of the high lames of their religion is a matter-of-fact reality, whatever Westerners may think of the idea. It is this mood which James Ullman captures in *The Sands of Karakorum*, which he then turns to the purposes of his

novel—a story which, he says, has haunted him since 1939, and which he worked out during fourteen years.

In the desert, not far from Karakorum, the journalist friend of John Bickel encounters an old lame who relates to him the story of the prophecy about Genghis Khan. In the words of the lame:

"Eight hundred years ago, the story tells, vast storms of wind and sand arose in the region between the Altai Mountains and the Gobi Desert. The nomad tribes, terrified by these portents of nature, consulted the seers and wizards as to their meaning and were told that the storms announced the birth of a child who had been chosen by God to conquer the world. This child, they said, would, in the fulness of maturity, emerge from behind the sands. He would march, irresistible, to the north, the south, the east, the west, until he was master of the earth from sea to sea. He would march out of the desert, out of the heart of Asia, bearing the wrath of God against the evil of the world; and so great was this wrath, so terrible was its destruction, that it would slay his enemies unto the last man and turn the earth they inhabited into a waste of black sand."

The old man paused and touched his prayer wheel. "In all these things," he went on, "the seers and wizards were right. And they were right in another thing also. They said that this child would be recognizable at its birth by a mark which God would put upon it: a clot of blood held tightly in its hand. Genghis Khan was born holding such a clot. He was born in the valley, beyond this ridge. . . ."

"Now eight hundred years have passed," he murmured, "and now the sands blow again. Now another child is born in the city beyond the sands—a child chosen by God—but not to be Dalai Lama. *For this child, too, holds in its hand a clot of blood. . . .*"

Prepared by this revelation, the journalist finally overtakes Bickel, finding him dressed as a lame, with two others, waiting to complete the last lap of their pilgrimage to the place "beyond the sands." Bickel will not go back. His life as a Westerner is burned out, even as, in the old lame's eyes, the West itself has burned itself out through violence and unbelief. Bickel tells his friend why he will not go back:

"I have seen it all," he said. "I have seen my daughter raped and killed by men whom I had loved and trusted. It is not only for her I grieve, but for them; for all of us who have made ourselves and our world what they are. It is that world that is dying;

that must die. The wind is blowing, the sands are drifting; soon it will be gone and in its place. . . ." He paused. . . . "In its place," he said, "will be the new world—the new life—that even now is being born in the darkness beyond the Sands of Karakorum."

My eyes strained into the night, but saw nothing. As if from the pit of a dream, I heard myself speaking. "But there is nothing there," I said—"in Karakorum. Only a ruin. Only a waste."

"Exactly. That is *why* it is being born there. Born in the waste—out of emptiness—because of emptiness—to fill the emptiness."

"—this child—"

"Yes."

"—who will change the world

"Yes."

"—because it holds in its hand—" My voice caught. My mind spun in darkness.

"*Because it holds in its hand,*" said Bickel softly, "*what the hearts of men are ready to receive.*"

This is all. Ullman is too much of an artist to say more. Bickel sets out for the place beyond the sands, the correspondent returns, and the reader ponders the strange, fanatical nihilism of the legend, which is somehow different from Western versions of *Götterdämmerung*. Ullman takes his world of wonder no further into the future, for this is the offense of the science-fiction writers who insist upon describing all the props and scenery of their futurist drama. So doing, they subtract reality from their tale, for they *can't* write about the future—they are not men of the future, but only some not-so-clever contemporaries who are pretending to know what they do not know.

But even these mechanics of story-telling betray the same longings for escape from this world. Like Ullman, they recognize the symptoms of sickness and decay. It is a question of wanting terribly to believe in a larger world, a world where the impossible is possible, where mystery and imagination have full rein, where little men will be little no longer, but free to become what they will.

Ullman's story is, we think, a serious manifestation of this feeling, and Ullman is willing to make the necessary pact with fate. We have, he thinks, to pay for all our destruction, our waste of ability, our

tasteless luxury and shallow pleasures. The point is that this is no Arabian Nights' tale of magic and incantation. Rather, the outlet from the drab existence of an outworn, skeptical rationalism is obtained by a mystic path in which the legend of Genghis Khan is no more than a convenient device. Bickel does not rub a lamp to win the attentions of a genie. He searches the philosophic profundities of the East. Slowly, he cleanses himself of guilt, of sectarianism, of all the sins, gross and refined, of the West. The supernaturalism of this tale is not *anti*-natural in spirit, but a development which flows with deep logic from the irrepressible longings of a human heart.

To get rid of the demons of Western intellectualism, Ullman carries his reader to far off Tartary, and there, in an atmosphere of dread supernaturalism, he brings together the ultimate in philosophic refinement—the old lame, purged by life of all but the hunger to know the truth—and the violent primitivism of the desolate steppes. The winds of Karakorum blow away the veils of skepticism. Somehow, in this Never-Never Land of Asia, the simple longing of men for peace and truth becomes the one transcendent value, and all the rest drops away. And then, like the memory of a besetting nightmare, we are made to admit that all that any "saviour" can bring to mankind is "*what the hearts of men are ready to receive.*"

It is a way of saying, we suppose, that there will be no peace until men are ready to pay its asking price.

Novelists, in their best moments, articulate the conscience of their times. A few years ago, Nevil Shute wrote a book which had the religious quest as its theme *Round the Bend*, the story of a religion of brotherhood which swept the world and melted away age-old antagonisms. Other men write of the sick minds and hearts of their fellows—and of the losing battle so many fight to preserve themselves against the Philistines. Taken all together, the works of modern writers are declarations of war upon the world in which they were born. It is not, they say, a world fit to live in. But not many writers are able to chronicle with conviction the steps taken by their characters to make the world a better place. Even Nevil Shute's story must be honored more for what it attempted than for what it accomplished. The *Sands of Karakorum* is less pretentious—less, that is, an effort to tell us what to do

than it is an insistence that we must do *something*. The only true *whole* man in the story is a man tortured and torn—who finds his healing in leaving altogether the world he knows.

It is this clean break with the past, perhaps, that we need to recognize as necessary. To lose oneself in Outer Mongolia is certainly not the answer, but in this story the keening sands of Karakorum are only the *deus ex machina* of release from the conceits and prejudices of the age. Bickel has to "get away" from the West which nurtured him—and nearly destroyed him—in order to acquire a sense of history, and of personal destiny. He lost "everything," but he became a man. He is, so to say, "born again." He found out, through the ordeal of personal guilt and suffering, what it means to give up life in order to live anew. It was his way, perhaps, of learning the meaning of the story of Jesus, who became Christ.

LETTER FROM MEXICO

CUIEAPAM DE GUERRERO.—Everything from counsellor, arbitrator and confidant to priest and lawyer—a man of omniscient knowledge—this is the rural teacher of Mexico.

Maestro Octaviano, principal of *Escuela Primaria* "Vicente Guerrero," has taught in rural schools for fifteen years, the last four in the village of his birth.

Maestro Octaviano taught four years before enrolling in this normal school which he attended five years in addition to five years enlisted at the *Instituto Autónomo de Ciencias y Artes del Estado*, of Oaxaca. From 1941 to 1947, he was a primary school teacher in the mountain village of Sola de Vega, south of Oaxaca. After teaching one year in Zaachila, the native returned to the village of his birth, Cuilapam de Guerrero, where he has remained since 1949.

Although the educational task in Cuilapam is formidable, if what has been accomplished is any criterion, the future gives reason for hope. (According to the 1950 census, 2462 out of a local population of 4500 are illiterate, but only four pupils from Cuilapam availed themselves of free secondary education last year.) Not religious dogma, but positive and practical phases of life that will improve social and economic life, such as soil conservation and hygiene, are stressed by the rural teacher. Parental opposition to the enlistment of their children in school, as well as resistance to the teaching of science, is diminishing. In the *barrio* of San Juan a liberal outlook is apparent, due to five factors: the cumulative effect of the rural school; the influence of *Escuela Normal*; local teachers influencing their families; families spreading influence to others; and, abuses of the clergy.

Although the federal government pays the salaries of all teachers, school improvements and maintenance costs are met by the local community from a fund supplied by crops grown by village labor on property adjoining the schools, which, before enactment of the Reform Laws separating Church and State, belonged to the Church. All three schools of Cuilapam have their individual cultivated parcels which are sown and harvested by local peasants as a public service.

Known as *téquio* from *tequitl*, Aztec for work, this indigenous institution of voluntary community work survives in Cuilapam as a heritage from the past.

Maestro Octaviano has a capacious skepticism of the clergy nourished by long experience. The priest fills his pockets invoking God, the politician fattens his purse in the name of country, the Maestro says.

According to reliable sources, the local priest charges fifty to sixty pesos for mass, ninety to one hundred pesos for special mass—wedding or *mayordomía*—and five pesos for baptism. While some native newlyweds manage to evade the religious ceremony they can hardly avoid the traditional baptism of their children—at which time the parents are married with benefit of clergy. Commuting by jeep over a wide territory from headquarters in Zaachila, there is not a day when the local priest does not collect two hundred pesos—twenty-five dollars, U.S. currency—for masses alone. The peasant, who cannot afford a kerosene stove, is also gouged by the politician who extorts his bite or *mordida* wherever he can.

"They are very lovable, aren't they?" This was the rhetorical question asked by Maestro Ranulfo Guzman. One could not quarrel that the ninety pupils attending *Escuela Primaria* "Vasco de Quiroga," situated on a hill commanding a panoramic view of the section of this village known as Rancho Quemado, were a delight to visit. A veteran with more than thirty-three years of teaching experience in all parts of rural Mexico, the smiling teetotaler looks younger than his fifty-four years. His father, a Quicatecan Indian, taught forty years during the regime of Porfirio Diaz. Dispersed and hispanicized, the descendants of this aboriginal tribe no longer speak their native tongue. His eighty-nine-year-old mother, who is Mixteca, speaks the language of her ancestors, but Maestro Ranulfo is only aware that Quicatlan, his birthplace, means "Land of Song" in the *idioma* of his father.

CORRESPONDENT IN MEXICO

REVIEW

"THE BEST OF TWO WORLDS"

IT is inevitable, we suppose, for readers to have to put up with a reviewer's propensity to give a great deal of space to a "favorite author," but it seems unlikely that many MANAS subscribers have been surfeited by discussions of Joseph Wood Krutch or samples of his prose. Except for a short postscript, *The Best of Two Worlds* (William Sloane Associates, \$3) is composed of essays written by Krutch before he had moved to the Arizona desert, and has much the same tone and flavor as his *Twelve Seasons*. The blending of nature observation, philosophy and humor makes this volume, however, one of the best, if not the best, of the author's "nature books." And while we are still especially attracted to *The Desert Year*, the essays of *The Best of Two Worlds* probe a greater variety of questions. In his first chapter, Krutch addresses himself to the "nature lover versus city lover" debate in the following manner:

Everything reminds me that man is an incident in nature rather than, as one comes to suppose in the city, that the natural is, at most, an incident, surviving precariously in a man-made world. If I do on my own a little of that peeping and botanizing which Wordsworth scorned, I think that I profit less from what I learn *about* nature than I do from what I should prefer to call the example she sets me—the example, I mean, of confidence, of serenity, and, above all, of joy. In the city, perhaps especially in the city of today, one may pass whole weeks without meeting a single joyous person or seeing a single joyous thing. One may meet laughter there, and wit—sometimes, perhaps, a fragment of wisdom. These are all good things which I would not willingly do without. But joyousness, as distinguished from diversion and amusement and recreation, is so rare that a whole philosophy has been developed to make a virtue out of its absence.

Then there is the question of "art" versus nature:

To anyone merely country-bred, I should certainly not speak of nature's superiority over art, nor should I tell him, if he happened to long for concert halls or art exhibits, that the wood thrush is in certain ways as much worth listening to as Isabelle Baillie, and the song sparrow is habitually in much better voice than a certain still-popular coloratura whom I had better not name. That would be worse

than fatuous; it would be, for him, positively untrue. Whether one is inclined to say: "Nature I love, and next to nature, art," or whether one reverses the order of precedence, may quite properly depend largely upon how many opportunities one has had to experience his love for the one or the other.

But what I would not say to the merely country-bred, I should not hesitate to say to the bigoted metropolitan. If he asked me whether I did not feel seriously the lack of those opportunities for artistic enjoyment which, by the way, only a very few of the very largest cities abundantly afford, I should ask him to take a look at the fresh new moon above the tree on some clear, crisp evening, or even merely to compare the drive home through country roads from some sortie into the village with a return by subway—or even by taxi, if he happened to be one of those whose economic status permits him to remain most of the time above ground.

More on the same theme occurs in a later chapter:

Poetry, like all the other arts, is an aid to contemplation and subtler than the routine of the thermometer or the classification of butterflies. But like the other aids it also may become an end in itself, and the "lover of poetry" is frequently one who loves nothing except the mechanics of an incantation which no longer calls anything forth from the vasty deep and who therefore spends his time poring over what has become no more than gibberish. No good ode to a skylark was ever intended as a permanent substitute for the skylark himself, and yet it is common enough to find admirers of the "nature poets" rather proud of the fact that they have never looked at a bird and certainly could not tell Wordsworth's Lesser Celandine from Tennyson's dozing Pimpernel. They know how the poets talk but not what they talk about.

In the classroom a student who had been reading Keats once asked if there were any nightingales in the United States and was laughed at for his pains—not because any other member of the group knew but because it was thought ridiculous to raise a question so remote from the poem. Perhaps there are college courses in the romantic poets which include some discussion of the birds, beasts, and flowers with which these poets were so strangely familiar, but I never heard of one. Yet I can think of "background materials" sometimes presented which seem to me less immediately relevant, and I should not be shocked to find in a college catalogue something like "English B237. Natural History for English Majors."

The following is a typical example of Krutch's capacity for being philosophical without also being pedantic or boring. What is really involved here is the whole matter of the contemplative life, which hinges, in turn, upon one's favorite definition of time:

Sometimes a sympathetic acquaintance who knows what I have been doing—and what I have not been doing [anent life "in the country"]—asks me pityingly if "the days do not seem long?" Of course they do. That is one of the best things about them. How else, in heaven's name, should one want them to seem? What confession—if one pretends to find existence sweet—could be more dreadful than speaking happily of the time which seems short; than to say, not with regret, but with an air of self-congratulation, "I do not know where the day went"—or the week, or the month, or the year, or, finally, the lifetime itself.

Those who talk frankly of their need for "distraction" are sometimes frowned upon by the serious minded, but those who boast that they want always to be "occupied" are usually admired. And yet the two things turn out very often to be the same thing, or at least to have the same object, and I have no more respect for the man who must always be busy than for the one who must always be distracted. We are even advised to take our minds off ourselves, but it seems to me—whatever the psychiatrists may say about the minority who pass through their hands—that a far larger number of people should be advised, once at least, to put their minds *on* themselves, where, obviously, they have not very often been. "We only live once" is a saying most inappropriate on the lips where it is most often found, for they most commonly are the lips of those who seem determined to be unaware that they are living that once.

Krutch's apology for "nature writing" is very disarming—and not much of an apology. He is aware that the attitude usually expressed in regard to people of his part-time profession is one of condescension. But may not the reason for this be that literature, which used to blend appreciation of the natural world with nearly every poem or story, has become separated from roots in nature? As cities and urban routines grow more demanding, people have less to do with nature, and writers, being people, likewise. "After all," writes Krutch, "it is only with machines that most people are more than casually familiar. And perhaps it is trying to think in this way that makes us unhappy—nearly everybody seems to agree that we are—because we

know in our hearts that we are not machines and grow lonesome in a universe where we are little aware of anything else which is not." This leads him to reflect upon the dangers of a society "which operates like a machine composed of standard parts," wherein "men can be altered to become whatever cogs or levers the machines happen to require at the moment" (Cf. Macdonald's *The Root Is Man*).

How did all this come about? Why are we so easily absorbed in totalitarian patterns? Krutch suggests that we submit ourselves to a mechanical set of common denominators which science and psychology talk about as the "body machine" and the "brain machine," while our sociologists and economists think principally in terms of groups and strata of society rather than in terms of individuals. So, with Krutch, we may conclude that "when men lived most intimately with things which were alive they thought of themselves as living. When they began, on the contrary, to live most intimately with dead things, they began to suppose that they, too, were dead. And once men were thought of as machines, governments began inevitably to be thought of as merely a method of making the machines operate productively."

As we turn the pages of *The Best of Two Worlds*, the knowledge that we have omitted other passages equally or more interesting disturbs us, yet our "review" is already little more than quotation. We shall, therefore, simply parallel the suggestion made over a year ago in regard to *The Desert Year*, saying that *The Best of Two Worlds* is also an excellent gift volume, for both friends and for one's own private library. Rambling, impromptu discussions of everything from poets to politics may not sound particularly inviting, but Krutch makes them so.

COMMENTARY

MYSTERIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

ALDOUS HUXLEY, we learn from the March 7 Los Angeles *Times*, has written a twentieth-century version of De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*—with this difference, that while De Quincey was an addict, Huxley, whose choice of drug was mescaline (known for centuries as peyote to the American Indians), tried the narcotic as a psychological experiment and recorded his reactions in his latest book, *Doors of Perception* (Harper, \$1.50). The *Times* writer summarizes:

Flowers radiated light and beauty such as he (Huxley) had never conceived of. Automobiles with their smooth, bulging panels looked so much like their human creators that they reduced him to laughter.

The familiar books of his library glowed with the colors of heaven and seemed to leap from their shelves demanding to be read. He experienced a sense of "isness" with common articles such as wooden chairs—a sense of sharing the same life source with them which swept aside the differences which divide a human being from a piece of wood.

He retained complete control of himself physically, but his will power was reduced to almost nil, because it seemed that nothing was worth doing except drinking in the beauties and sensations revealed when mescaline opened this new door of perception.

Huxley has always been fascinated by the problems of human consciousness, although, in previous books, his curiosity has led him to mystical studies. This latest adventure suggests that the famous literateur, becoming impatient of the methods of introspection taught by ancient psychologists, has been looking around for short cuts. While his report has elements of interest, the real question is, What does this sort of experience mean? The sense of oneness, or "isness," recalls the more naturally achieved exhilaration felt by Admiral Byrd while isolated at an outpost in Antarctica, near the South Pole. Apparently, however, there is a phase of body chemistry involved in such states of feeling. Years ago,

Vivekananda, the brilliant disciple of Ramakrishna, remarked that the subjective effect of inhaling nitrous oxide resembled one of the "yogi" states, and we have no doubt that there have been those foolish enough to seek this "easy way" of gaining what they suppose is "mystical euphoria." Yet one wonders whether the taking of drugs for this purpose might not create an impassable barrier to deeper realizations.

Somehow, so long as Mr. Huxley pursues this line of investigation, we incline to prefer the writings of his biologist brother, Julian, as a less confusing influence for our times.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

WE have for comment a Los Angeles *Daily News* column by Dr. George Crane which should certainly stimulate discussion, particularly if we find ourselves able to say anything in favor of Dr. Crane's suggestion—which is, briefly, that "it is OK to reward children with money for good marks in school."

Some parents have wondered, and one asked Dr. Crane, if there is anything harmful in "paying a child for receiving good grades." If, they reason, a child works hard for several months and brings home a creditable report card, why shouldn't there be some cash reward for those long months of book work? Crane's answer describes a system he has obviously instituted with his own children:

It is perfectly proper to pay a child for school marks. . . . "But, Dr. Crane, many parents put too much pressure on their children until the youngsters cheat to bring home high marks," somebody may argue.

That is true, but it does not invalidate the worth of paying for school marks. That excess pressure is bad, whether you pay for the "A" and "B" and "C" grades.

Children need money. Paying for passing marks is one honest and desirable way to let them earn it.

We have done this with our 5 children in grammar, high school and now in college. Each semester hour of "A" work in college gets them \$15, so if they have a 5-hour course and make "A" therein, that's worth \$75.

Each hour of "B" brings them \$10 and each hour of "C" produces \$5, so they could theoretically earn their entire tuition each semester if they'd make straight "A," which they don't.

But this "piece work" rate is the same as the one we use in industry quite successfully. It lets the worker or student set his own income.

And millions of you parents have found that this or similar methods of pay for grades is very fair and successful, despite some of the protests of childless theorists who are sheer "brain-trusters" in child education.

Since we stand guilty of being a "theorist," though not childless, we will have to stand with our brethren, at least theoretically: paying someone for learning, in our opinion, is in principle pretty horrifying. The greatest of men are those who feel that learning is its own reward, the highest of joys, and far superior to anything material or monetary. The "ideal" educational system would be one in which this idea occurs spontaneously, everywhere—in pupils, teachers and parents. Actually, however, we have to remember that education as we know it is still very much involved with the mastering of certain technical abilities, and that there is little relationship between proficiency in punctuation and the thrill which the philosophically inclined gain from genuine self-discovery. In a compulsory educational system, too, some students are bound to find themselves tied to subjects in which they are not at the moment interested. Thus rewards and punishments have seemed practical, and even grades constitute rewards and punishment to some degree. Now, if technical aspects of accomplishment are thus dealt with, the same logic which supports grading can be used to support additional rewards for approved performances, and Dr. Crane's proposal is not so very different from most previous theories.

Another important aspect of the matter is the fact that in our present society children have little or no opportunity to earn money for their own personal expenses. Back in "the old days," when many more families lived under rural conditions, parents who were interested in helping their children assume responsibilities commensurate with age and intelligence, encouraged their young to raise chickens or rabbits, work for a time in a neighbor's orchard, or whatever. And this was a very good thing, so good a thing that any partial equivalent the family is able to work out today may be regarded as extremely desirable. But as things stand, we can't work up as much indignation against Dr. Crane as we imagine a lot of parents and educators will. At least, in the "Crane system," the child or youth is early expected to establish a connection between his own efforts and the money made available to him by parents, and he becomes used to "working hard" if he wishes to make additional expenditures possible.

The doling out of money as largesse has never struck us as a good idea—even though in exceptional cases, where an extraordinarily fine rapport exists between parents and children, there seem to be no ill effects.

A lot depends upon how the "system" adopted is explained to the child. If any parents are currently using the "Crane System," or something like it, the parent can say to himself, and to the child, that the sooner the child shows his capacity to meet the requirements of his society, and the more he makes of whatever educational opportunities are offered to him, the more he demonstrates to the parent his ability to become self-sufficient. And since self-sufficiency inevitably means a greater capacity for responsibility, the closer to self-sufficiency one comes, the more he can be trusted with responsibility. Moreover, the child who progresses rapidly in his educational endeavors offers some kind of evidence to the parent that the general investment of shelter, food, and clothing which the parent is making is being turned to some kind of account, and when our investments are doing well we are naturally inclined to want to invest more.

This line of thought, however, has an unattractive side. Such words as "investment" sound a bit like Dr. Crane's insistence that all "art for art's sake is bunk," that the child needs to be offered tangible rewards to win his best efforts. Our previous discussions of a "contract theory of education" indicated general distrust of the reward psychology, and the offering of money for good grades stands dubiously on the borderline in relation to the "contract theory." In any case, though, we are willing to invite criticism by the final guess that few children will actually be harmed by the "Crane system" any more than by grades themselves, especially if explained to the child as we have suggested, and if the explanation is genuinely grasped by the children themselves.

Now we should like to return to our brethren, the "theorists" and "brain-trusters," for we have a definite sympathy for educators who are endeavoring to eliminate grades altogether from the public schools. We have noted with approval the report card brought home by a small daughter, on which check marks are placed against such vague terms as

"Satisfactory," "Improving," "Needs Improving," etc. We understand that a few schools have experimentally done away with even these mild categories, and perhaps this is better yet. For the word "Satisfactory" does seem to be only a half-way substitute for the A's, B's and C's to which we have for so long been accustomed. The word "Satisfactory" tells the child that he is really "in," that he has arrived, that he belongs to the elect, that nothing more needs to be done. The highest mark of all ought, we think, to be "*Improving*." It is the eagerness to improve, to learn more, to build upon capacities already developed, that indicates the success of the educator and the continued enthusiasm of the pupil. Some students level off at a certain rate of performance and could be described by some noncommittal phrase like "stabilized at standard," which would indicate that they were beyond criticism—adequate so far as "the system" is concerned—but not currently inspired. But no such category should ever be permitted to hide the fact that all human beings, adults as well as children, need to become dissatisfied with their own levelling off in mental output. On the other hand, there might be a value in including such terms as "exceptional mastery," to indicate the very special abilities and capacities that some children have, apart from simple determination. The parents should know, we assume, when a child blossoms forth with a truly original flare in a certain field, but in this case an "exceptional mastery" grade would of necessity be extremely rare and not looked for nor worked toward by the children consciously, but rather recognized as something comparable to the phenomenal physical abilities along some line which occasionally appear in the young.

FRONTIERS

The Assumptions of Warmakers

PEACE, as Thomas à Kempis pointed out long ago, requires that men be willing to work for those things that make for peace, as well as to clamor their devotion to peace itself. Primary among the things that make for peace, in modern times, is adequate knowledge of history—in particular, the history concerned with how the great wars of the twentieth century began. Reading in this field is likely to be a shock to those whose understanding of the origins of these wars has been based on newspaper and magazine article accounts. Practically every American without scholarly tendencies, for example, was content during the first ten or twelve years after World War I to believe that Germany was almost entirely responsible for that conflict. Only in the Thirties did there begin to be published books which showed that this conclusion was not only arguable, but actually doubtful. Harry Elmer Barnes' *Genesis of the World War*, the first of the full-dress historical studies, came as a literally appalling revelation to the reader who felt he "knew" the right and wrong of the matter. Then, a few years later, appeared Sidney Bradshaw Fay's *Origins of the World War*, a larger and even more impressive volume pointing to much the same judgment that Barnes arrived at—that both France and Russia shared at least equal responsibility with Germany for precipitating the war.

In 1939, H. C. Peterson published his *Propaganda for War*, a thorough analysis of the appeals to which the United States was exposed, giving evidence that the people had had no real opportunity to make up their own minds on the basis of facts, but were led, stage by stage, into the conflict by a calculated program of emotional stimuli and biased news reports. Reporting on the Peterson volume, C. Hartley Grattan said in the *New York Times Book Review*:

How does one know that a similar movement has not been set going in anticipation of a new war on

the Continent of Europe? Since so many other phases of war preparations are now known to be under way which were in earlier times not initiated until the fighting had actually begun, how can anyone be sure that propaganda aimed to engage American sympathies has not been undertaken officially, as one is positive it has unofficially?

The reader of such books is likely to develop both pessimism and indignation. *What chance* has the average citizen to make himself effective by rational means in opposing war, when the tools of rational behavior—facts, and unprejudiced discussion of them—are the first thing to disappear when diplomats and statesmen decide either to risk or to invite an armed conflict?

Arguments about whether or not a certain war was "necessary" are usually futile affairs, governed by rhetorical device and righteously moral challenges. More often than not, the assumptions made in such arguments have small basis in fact, or they are adopted in neglect of other and equally important assumptions. In this respect, arguments about wars are very much like wars themselves, for wars are usually precipitated by men who insist upon dogmatic assumptions.

A chapter in *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* (Caxton Printers, Idaho, 1953), edited by Harry Elmer Barnes, makes this point very clear in respect to the Pacific struggle with Japan in World War II. This chapter, by William Neumann, who has studied Japanese-American relationships for years, shows beyond doubt that both Japan and the United States misconceived the results of the policies they adopted. Brief introductory passages by Neumann provide a simple account of why the Japanese behaved as they did:

An island nation with a growing population, stimulated by Western penetration, found its resources inadequate to achieve its aspirations for a higher standard of living. Following the Western pattern, Japan looked abroad for land, markets, and raw materials. Japan also developed aspirations for the status of a major power, again stimulated by Western influences, particularly by the humiliating experiences of the early post-Perry decades. It was in these formative years that Japan learned how helpless

a small power could be in the face of energetic Western imperialism, backed by hostile naval squadrons. These two aspirations combined to create an expansionist movement in Japan which looked primarily to Asia for its fulfillment. When economic penetration of Asia was checked by political obstacles in the form of intransigent Chinese war lords, Japan turned to the ultimate weapon of imperialism, military force.

Japanese expansionism also brought to the fore a chauvinistic group of military leaders who developed a racialist concept of Japan's manifest destiny. They believed that Asia was at last to find peace and economic progress under Japanese leadership in the form of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere. No alien nation, neither Russia nor the United States, was permitted to stand in the way of this goal. To this end Japan fought a border war in Manchuria against the Soviet Union from 1937 to 1939. When the United States, from 1931 onward, stood firmly behind the Chinese Nationalist government, Japan's best customer became Japan's enemy. When other methods seemed unavailing, Japan prepared for a trans-Pacific war to remove the American barrier to an area which Japan believed was vital for national security and prosperity. But the willingness of the people of the United States to fight a long and costly war over a cause remote from their shores was not foreseen by Japan's leaders. This was the fatal error of Japanese policy. This was the false assumption which was to bring that nation to defeat and to destroy the accomplishments of two generations of vigorous diplomacy.

The counter-policy of the United States, pressed first by Secretary of State Henry Stimson, and seconded and furthered by Franklin D. Roosevelt after he became President, was founded on the view that this country was vitally interested in blocking Japanese expansion in Asia—even to the point of war. The value of Neumann's chapter in the Barnes book lies in its calm, easy-to-understand recital of the steps and decisions which led to war.

Neumann shows how, if one allows to Japan the standards of decision which prevailed among the Western democracies, the island nation was forced to increase her naval armaments. Japan wanted only the right to build defensively to protect her own waters, or at least to establish

ratios of defensive armament with other major powers which would place her in a strong defensive position. At the London naval conference in 1935, Japan proposed a general reduction of tonnages which would have made a naval war between the three biggest powers impossible, but both the British and the Americans rejected this plan, the British insisting that they needed a larger navy to defend their empire, the Americans likewise claiming that their "strategic needs" were far greater than Japan's. While Japan was blamed for the breakdown of the conference, the United States, under the Roosevelt administration, began to build more ships of war.

Through the years, the President's closest political and military advisers counseled against aggressive policy toward Japan. It was pointed out that America's commercial interests in Japan were far greater than those in China. When Stimson, in 1933, won Roosevelt's support for his nonrecognition policy in relation to the puppet state of Manchukuo, both Raymond Moley and Rexford Tugwell tried to persuade him that this policy was both futile and dangerous. Roosevelt responded that his ancestors had traded with the Chinese and that he had the deepest sympathy for them. A little earlier, President Hoover had refused to allow Stimson to impose economic sanctions on Japan, continuing the "tradition of American foreign policy" that American interests in the Orient were not worth a war. In Roosevelt, however, Stimson found a willing supporter. Neumann describes the result:

If, at any point in history, the die is finally cast after years of preparation, that point had been reached in the years 1936 and 1937. In Japan the political and economic developments assured a continuation of the policy of expansion. In the United States the Roosevelt administration committed itself to programs which meant eventually going to war to stop Japanese expansion. It was, thereafter, only a question of time until the two policies converged and exploded into war.

There was little difficulty in passing bills for American naval construction in the late thirties. Those who saw the imminence of war with Japan

were confident that it would be easy to crush the Japanese forces. "The American racialist stereotype of the Oriental, assuming basic inferiority on the part of the yellow races, did not permit any consideration of the possibility that the Japanese might be a formidable opponent." Then, in 1940, the Pacific Fleet was assigned to Pearl Harbor, over the opposition of both Admiral Richardson (Commander in Chief of the Fleet) and Admiral Stark (Chief of Naval Operations). Richardson was later removed from his post, apparently for similar unwelcome advice.

Admiral Stark also argued against certain economic sanctions imposed on Japan, maintaining that America was not ready for a war in the Pacific. However, in July, 1941, President Roosevelt issued an order freezing Japanese assets in the United States and stopping all trade with Japan. Neumann comments: "Japan now had no alternative but to bow to American demands or fight for the resources by which her economic and military strength was to be maintained. Short of a miraculous revolution, overthrowing army leadership, no change of course could be expected from the Japanese government."

At the end of his paper, Neumann remarks that American foreign policy in the Far East, under Roosevelt, was based on an exaggerated estimate of American political and economic interests in China, and on "the oft-disproved assumption that one major power can intimidate another by rapidly increasing its striking power without an arms race as the chief result." American leadership resolved to try to bully Japan into behaving, believed that this course was sufficiently desirable to risk a war, and calculated that if war came, it would be speedily won. Neumann concludes:

On the basis of materials now available there is no evidence that these assumptions were seriously re-examined at any time from 1933 down to Pearl Harbor. The warnings of Ambassador Grew and other students of the Far East. . . went unheeded. In 1935, for example, a former chief of the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs warned

his superiors that the defeat of Japan "would merely create a new set of stresses, and substitute for Japan the U.S.S.R.—as the successor of Imperial Russia—as a contestant (and at least an equally unscrupulous and dangerous one) for the mastery of the East. Nobody except perhaps Russia would gain from our victory in such a war. . . ."

This profound prophecy was ignored. . . .

We cannot, it is true, undo the mistakes or wrongs of the past. There is no value, either, in stirring up bitterness about them. The only reason at all for learning about the wars of the past is in order to do what we can to avoid unnecessary wars in the future. Was the Pacific phase of World War II "unnecessary"? We shall not attempt to answer, but only repeat with Neumann that it was a war which was "paid for in American lives and resources, netted nought but ruin for Japan and assisted in the birth of an Asia more determined than ever to reject the Western interloper."