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A CULTURAL DELUSION

THERE'S probably nothing very new about this, but during the past few years we've noticed a number of articles in popular magazines dealing with marital felicity and the major and minor obstacles which stand in its way. Some of the articles have been clever, some of them dull, but all of them, so far as we can see, have been inconsequential.

Take for example Elsie McCormick's latest effort in the *Saturday Evening Post* for June 13. Miss McCormick is a seasoned journalist with a talent for neat and "telling" phrases, but that this article is the best she can do on how husbands may learn to get along with wives, and *vice versa*, is evidence of an almost immeasurable bankruptcy of serious thought. It isn't just Miss McCormick's bankruptcy, of course. The article is also a measure of the *Post* editors' judgment of what the several million "typical" Americans who read the *Post* will probably be interested in. The point of the article, heaped up, pressed down, and running over, is that husbands find their wives boring because husbands don't bother to talk to their wives about anything important or interesting. So the little women just vegetate and go to seed.

Miss McCormick has some sprightly advice:

> If you want to save your wife from being a bore, why not make a conscious effort to provide her with one laugh a day? Surely you can find one amusing story, idea, or incident, during the hours away from home, even if you have to crib it from an old magazine. It will lighten the atmosphere, reduce tensions, cut down nagging and encourage her to look for funny things in her day to tell you. Of course, if you are married to a lady with no sense of humor, that is your hair shirt. The chances are, however, that her sense of humor has merely become dimmed by neglect. A daily polish might work wonders.

The prescriptions go on and on. One couple takes freighter trips to the Galapagos Islands, another pair visits an Indian Reservation. Then there are hobbies. "A friend who has been active in the Audubon Society for years told me," says Miss McCormick, "that he never heard of a divorce between bird-watchers." There are also chess, astronomy, gardening, and printing your own greeting cards. Some fun.

Miss McCormick's leading success-story is this:

> I know a plain-looking, middle-aged woman who began making a systematic effort to fit her conversation to the interests of men she met at dinner parties, even doing a little advance homework if necessary. She soon became as popular as a Cotton Queen, and indirectly helped her husband get an excellent new job.

Getting to the point of all this, neither Miss McCormick nor any of the other journalistic counsellors to bored, inefficient, or "thoughtless" husbands and wives ever mention the thing that needs to be talked about most of all—the fact that people who have problems at this level are people who have never really looked at their lives to see if they are in any sense worth while.

"Planned" conversation of the sort Miss McCormick advocates is really nothing more than a smokescreen to hide the emptiness of days and years of work which has no further purpose than the acquisition of money, and of hours of relief from that work, so that one may go back to it with a modicum of refreshment. Actually, what Miss McCormick describes so gaily is something of a nightmare. In a sense, her advice amounts to a recommendation for consideration for others, which is always good advice, but the problem which shrieks for attention is that the wives she describes have no lives of their own except as women who are finding it difficult to be amusing and entertaining to their husbands. This, as we understand it, is the geisha girl theory of the role

of womankind. We don't expect to institute any revolution through a slight discussion of such things, but it seems so completely futile and misleading to set the problem as Miss McCormick and other writers have set it, that some notice of the matter is in order.

The problem is much bigger than marriage; in reality, it has little or nothing to do with marriage, although the symptoms naturally emerge here, as elsewhere. It is the problem of aimless lives, of unconsidered ends, and of people who have been allowed to grow to a supposed maturity without becoming aware of the possibility of an entirely different sort of life.

This brings us to an old theme—the theme of the "hero" and the almost complete absence from our civilization of the "hero" ideal, except in some synthetic form of cooked-up propaganda for nationalist purposes. The role of the myth and the legend in past civilizations was to keep alive the ideal of heroism, to hold before the young the nobility of daring. While the objection, "Not everybody wants or is strong enough to be a hero," is not a very important one, since it represents a kind of complacency, or timidity, it must be answered in some way or other, if only because it represents a fact. Not everybody *does* want to be a hero. Here, again, the cultural ideal of heroism is important, for while many, perhaps the majority, would not choose to go out and fight dragons or McCarthys, if they are nurtured on noble examples they will at least be protected from the petty conceits of conformity. In our civilization, a hero—when he exists—is usually frowned upon as a man who should know better than to get people mad at him, or risk his job or his reputation in order to support some cause. He is condemned as "impractical" and shunned lest he influence others to abandon prudence and common sense. As much as any other cause, we suspect, the eclipse of the "hero" in modern times has created the "mass" psychology anatomized by Ortega, and made it possible for the modern demagogue to seem to speak with reason when he demands conformity of both act and opinion from one and all.

We do not mourn the "problems" discussed by Miss McCormick, but the delusion, shared by her, her editors, and many of her readers, that human happiness is in any way connected with their solution.

We shall not presume to prescribe an educational formula for the restoration of the hero ideal. This sort of cultural change and regeneration usually requires the "cooperation" of history, through the production of events which call out hidden reserves in human character, setting the tone for a new cycle of civilization. But meanwhile, there is value in considering our needs, so that the best possible advantage may be taken of historical turnings.

Letter from **SYRIA**

DAMASCUS.—All over the Arab world one is conscious of the hope flaming in Arab hearts that leadership toward solution of current problems will emerge from the new regimes in Egypt and Syria. Belief in local leadership is, of itself, a healthy thing to see. Especially is this so if it replaces faith in solutions from outside, for a notable characteristic of the Arab temperament is a belief in fairy godmothers. These may from time to time include Allah, the Americans, or dollars-and-tractors.

But this same belief in local leadership is sometimes obviously unhealthy, as may be seen in the almost frantic worship by some Palestinians of Syria's Strong Man Shishekly, or Egypt's Little Father Naguib. It sometimes reaches the pathological point, becoming openly identified with the anti-West ingredient in the current nationalism.

Syria indeed seems to be showing a new face to the world, with changes already evident at the borders. A small breach has been hammered in the wall between Arab states, and Arabs may now travel between Syria and Lebanon, for instance, upon mere presentation of valid national identity cards, with passports and visas no longer required. The foreign traveller, also, to judge from our most recent trip, is treated with a new courtesy—welcomed with official Syrian smiles, and passports handled expeditiously and cheerfully. Visa charges for foreigners, however, have not changed. It still costs an American 20 Syrian pounds ($5.65 at current rates) to spend over 48 hours in Syria.

There is a new air about Damascus. Streets are clean. The city's beautiful parks are well policed, and closed at 6 P.M. by a purposeful but courteous squad of policemen. Stone walls are no longer the olfactory horrors which they remain in Beirut and Amman. Policemen, tram drivers and conductors all show a remarkable friendliness, replacing their former ill-nature. All this, I recognize, may be significant only to the foreigner who has repeatedly experienced the unexampled degree of official suspicion and contempt of the past.

There is another difference in Damascus. As a result of a recent decree requiring all businesses in Syria to have Arab names, a number of familiar institutions now appear under different labels. Spinney's, the British grocery chain whose units appear in many countries, has suddenly become "Contracting and Trading Company, S.A.S." (The S.A.S. stands for Societé Anonyme Syrien, making it sound a bit like an alias.) Hotels, too, have "gone native," Swiss becoming Palmyra, Bristol changing to Hassoun, Resthaven to Beit Saadeh, and restaurants also assuming new names.

Nationalism has growing pains and requires many satisfactions, but Damascus is beginning to hold its head up. There are signs of honest self-respect and of pride in the city's unquestionable beauties. A Palestinian driver for a U.N. agency, on his first trip to Damascus in some time, told us yesterday with surprise and appreciation in his voice, "Things are better in Damascus. These people are getting somewhere."

The papers recently reported the assumption by the Republic of Syria's Vice Premier Shishekly of the additional offices of Minister of Defense and of the Interior. Taken with the fact that the Head of State, Fawzi Selo, is more or less of a figurehead, this puts Shishekly in the position usually achieved by the successful dictator: he is in direct, active charge of the Army and of the Police. It may or may not be coincidental that a news dispatch, printed in Beirut (in *The Daily Star* of June 2), read:

> Damascus, June 1.—Military police circles discovered today a net of intelligence and underground movements undertaken by persons related to a dissolved party. [All parties have been dissolved.] Police laid hands on documents showing means used by these subversive elements to cause panic and terrorism in the country. Among the

movement's acts was the spreading of false rumors against the new regime.

All persons involved in these activities were arrested, police announced.

Among documents discovered was one proving the existence of contact between this movement and foreign sources.

If you have a tendency to shiver, you are not alone. This looks like the classic framework for a developing dictatorship.

It is quite clear that the political and psychological needs of the Arab peoples are best met by achievements that are genuinely their own, neither forced upon them by other nations, as in the past, nor handed to them by the nations who now couch their approach in terms of "technical assistance." But one continues to hope that these achievements, and the meeting of these needs, may be brought about with the least possible development of dictatorship, even of the benevolent variety. The cost of cleaning up the city of Damascus, like the cost of running Italy's trains on time, *could* be pretty high.

CORRESPONDENT IN SYRIA

REVIEW
A CURIOUS CLARITY

IT has been said on high authority that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings proceedeth wisdom. Would it be feasible to go further and to suggest the possibility of wisdom from the mouth of a madman? I am prompted to this question by a book, recently published, and very well received, entitled *Wisdom, Madness and Folly*. It is written under the pseudonym John Custance, but the real name of the author, a manic-depressive, is known to me and I have experience of him at the midway period between the two cyclothymic extremes of mania and depression, and also in the former acute condition. "Custance," who is an erudite man, and an authority upon German history, subtitles his revealing and very touching account of his own condition, The Philosophy of a Lunatic .

On one other occasion I encountered a manic-depressive at the peak point of the manic state, and I recall the occasion vividly. I had been invited to meet a man for whom I have a profound respect and veneration—Bertrand Russell. Our hostess made up the fourth by inviting this manic-depressive. Throughout that evening, instead of sitting, as I had hoped, at the feet of Gamaliel, we were all silenced by a torrent of speech, lucid, coherent and quite intolerably brilliant. Yet the talker, as I was later told, had been several times confined as a manic-depressive. I recognized an insane element in that spate of speech, but never had a subsequent chance to ask Bertrand Russell whether he, also, detected lunacy. All this is discursive, I fear, but it brings me to a consideration of this most interesting and, I think, important book.

Now, there is a vast literature on the psychology of abnormality, but no book, so far as I know, written objectively by a victim of mental disease, and written with a keen insight into his own psycho-pathology. And in the whole literature of abnormal mental and emotional states from the pens of the psychiatrists, I know of no book that displays a comparable insight, save one, *Dark Legend*, by that most brilliant of psychiatrists, Frederic Wertham, of the New York Mental Hygiene Clinic. For the study of cyclothymic insanity, Custance's book should take its place as a standard work. This is how Professor Grensted, of Oxford University, speaks of Custance's strangely sharpened sensibility and insight into metaphysical problems:

> A second feature of this book is its insight into some of the deeper problems with which metaphysics and religion have to deal. Those who have had to deal with lunatics and acute neurotics often find themselves startled by the curious clarity with which their minds work. It is as though their approach to some of the profoundest problems has been simplified by their loss of touch with what we supposedly sane folk regard as reality. Most of us, in fact, are too much aware of complex circumstances and factors to reach any clear and recognizable pattern of truth. But the approach of the lunatic has in many cases something of the child's directness and simplicity.

Custance formed his theories before he came to the psychologists. When he did so he found that his concepts, set down in a mental hospital, were curiously like the basic ideas of Jung. He had, for himself, and quite independently, realized the parallel of his own padded-cell visions and raptures, so heavenly, he tells us in words reminiscent of St. Teresa of Avila, as to be beyond human communication, with those recorded by the Saints. He cons Freud and tells us that what Freud has said of the spiritual experiences of the saints as being the out-thrust of thwarted sexual energy, dovetails into his own experience. His manic phases are ecstatic and sexual in character. The Prime Mover, as he once assured me at the manic level (and to my apprehension, as we were alone) was nothing but the Libido, a sort of fantastic Phallus, as revealed to him in vision. His section on Abnormality and Mysticism is brilliant. His account of the horrors of the depressive phase are more horrific than anything James Thomson—surely a manic-depressive? —ever penned.

The Theory of Actuality he proceeds to expound is too complex, too subtle, to summarize

in these brief notes. What one feels, coming from this book, is that it may well be that the condition of abnormality is the condition precedent to metaphysical insight, and that the "lunatic" may have, at times, a vision of life, clearer than that of those of us who pass as "normal."

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We are unable to leave this provocative bit of reporting without further comment. The temptation is too great to at least have a try at unraveling something of these mysteries, even if we no more than tear loose a thread or two around the edges.

First, there is the at-first-glance odd connection between insanity and brilliance—some have said, between insanity and genius. We are reminded of passages in Fritz Peters' *The World Next Door,* in which the leading character muses on the intensity of psychological experience which sometimes comes to those who are tried in the fire of mental illness. It is as though the crust and rind of life are parted, leaving open avenues of vision to the mind's eye. We may think that something of the same kind of inward "revelation" came to Harold Maine, author of *If a Man Be Mad,* when we reflect upon the power of this volume to slash away the trivial and lay bare the unqualified values of the human ego—the ego straining, and here succeeding, to understand.

What will explain such things? The agony, perhaps, of fighting as for one's very life to reach some saving balance, has the power to end the diffuseness of ordinary psychic and intellectual experience. This might bring the insight of which these writers speak. If so, we could conclude—obviously enough—that insanity is of various sorts and levels—depending upon the individual. A man of delicately tuned mind and feelings might suffer the most, gaining the kind of vision these men talk about, whereas a coarser instrument would merely be dulled, grow frenzied, or sink into apathy.

Then there is the flow of brilliance exhibited by the manic-depressive. Again we are "reminded"—this time of an autobiographical fragment by Mozart, found, appropriately enough, in J. C. Colquhoun's *History of Magic* (published in London in 1851). Mozart wrote:

> When I am in good spirits, and in the right trim, for example, when riding in a carriage, or walking, perhaps, during the night, when unable to sleep—thoughts flow in upon me more readily, and, as it were, in a stream. Whence they come, and how, I know not, and I have no control over them. Those which come upon me I retain in my head, and hum them to myself—as others, at least, have told me. If I remain steady and uninterrupted, sometimes one thing, sometimes another, comes into my head to help make a piece of confectionery, according to the rules of counterpoint, and the tone of the different musical instruments. . . . Now this warms my soul, provided I am not disturbed. Then my mental work gradually becomes more and more extended, and I spread it out further and more clearly, until the piece really becomes in my head almost ready, even should it be of considerable length; so that I can survey it, in spirit, with a glance, as if I saw before me a beautiful picture, or a handsome person; and I hear it in imagination, not in detached portions, but, as it were, altogether, as a whole. Now, this is a feast. All my feelings and composition go on within me only as a lively and delighted dream. But to hear all this together is the best.

Geniuses and madmen, it may be, have opportunity to look out of windows barred and shaded to the rest of us; the genius looks, and we gain a symphony; the madman looks, and an undisciplined riot of expression results. What is the same is the opening into an inner world; what is different is the use made of what is seen. Hyslop's *The Great Abnormals* is a somewhat clinical study of individuals who have seemed to combine genius and madness; Richard Maurice Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* is a less orthodox but more interesting study of similar questions, with a metaphysical theory to liven the discussion.

At any rate, works of this sort lend weight to the idea that there are psychic seas in layers beneath and above the allegedly "normal" psychic environment, and that men break into these levels

from a number of reasons or causes, with sometimes extraordinary results.

A final note on the "sexual" aspect of madness: We recollect seeing in some technical book or other the comment—apparently a commonplace to the psychiatric profession—that religious insanity and sexual disturbances are closely linked. This has always seemed a logical association, at least in the case of religions which lay great stress on the idea of a *personal* God. Merely the imagery of the nun who gives up earthly marriage to become a "bride of Christ" suggests ample basis for delusion.

We have no special quarrel with the antique pagan notion of Pan piping maidens to his haunts in the forest, nor with the endless procreative symbolism of Eastern religions. But these doctrines and allegories, at least, have never dragged down to earth and to sexuality the abstract philosophical conception of the most high, the ultimate ground of reality. It remained for Western religion to impoverish the earth of its polytheistic symbolism, in subservience to the jealous monopoly of Jehovah, and to corrupt philosophy into the service of a theology which made maleness a leading attribute of the supreme deity. We have often wondered about Western scholars who have written disparagingly of Eastern "phallicism," while never noticing the phallic implications of *Jod,* the first Hebrew letter in the name of the Christian God, Jehovah. The phallicism of the West has been a misplaced and degrading symbolism, in contrast to the nature-worship involved in the pantheons of other and more ancient civilizations.

COMMENTARY
KRISHNAMURTI

TO do justice to a man who has been a prominent figure in a religious movement is always difficult. It is difficult, first, because religious movements themselves tend to go to emotional extremes, while, on the other hand, a large segment of critical opinion is innately suspicious of all things religious-and even all things philosophical or metaphysical—so that comment from this quarter generally starts out with an insuperable bias.

We print Ridgely Cummings' sketch of one of Krishnamurti's Ojai meetings (see Frontiers) because it seems to us to be a rather successful estimate of Krishnamurti—a man who, although he strenuously opposes the "follower" habit of religious devotees, and although he declares his disapproval of every sort of "authoritarianism," is nevertheless cast in the role of a "religious leader" by most of those who go to hear him speak.

In fairness to the movement through which Krishnamurti originally gained fame—the Theosophical Movement—it should be said that it did not start out as a typical religious movement at all. As a matter of fact, the founders of the Theosophical Movement—in particular, Madame H. P. Blavatsky—encouraged the comparative *study* of religions and philosophies, and supplied material for this study, so that, in those days, to be a theosophist meant using one's own evaluative and critical faculties. Historically, however, as the years went by, the Theosophical Movement, as represented by the original Theosophical Society, became increasingly like other religious movements, with authorities who made revelatory utterances and struck postures intended to indicate that they personally possessed ineffable wisdom. It is to the everlasting credit of Krishnamurti that he broke with all this nonsense and declared himself an ordinary man, not at all the "world savior" which his enthusiastic sponsors claimed him to be.

Today, he seems to be, as Ridgely Cummings says, possessed of considerable common sense, but he is apparently content to let his admirers passively absorb his aphorisms, without endeavoring to supply either the material or the atmosphere for provocative discussion. There is an "atmosphere," all right, but one of such breathless piety that it could easily confuse wiser and greater men. Evidently the people who want a "world savior" are unwilling to take Krishnamurti's advice and make an effort to think for themselves.

Probably we could think of clever things to recommend to Krishnamurti—ways in which he could stir his followers up a bit, and put them on their own for good, and it would be, we think, for everyone's good. But, after all, considering the background built for him by Mrs. Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, he has already done as much or more than we would ask of any man. And since one or two of our readers have revealed a special interest in Krishnamurti, we may let the matter rest. Ridgely Cummings' gentle but firm iconoclasm is doubtless enough for this week.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

EVERY once in a while we find ourselves talking about money, here, and not because we seek opportunity to encourage contributions to the support of MANAS—although that isn't a bad idea to promote, come to think of it. Our reason for discussing money in relation to children is that so many attitudes toward money in parent-child relationships seem to us irrational. One classification of parents apparently regards money as the root of all evil, while another group regards the *absence* of money as evil. The first class fears that the children may develop "materialistic interests" at an early age, while the others consider it a major project of their lives to see that their boys and girls will be "well-established" financially.

One reader, a professor of sociology, recently mailed us a copy of an article he had written many years ago for the *Journal of Home Economics* (January, 1932). This paper, "Money and the Child's Own Standards of Living," deals with psychological problems revolving around money-attitudes, especially in wealthy homes. For example:

> The very wealthy home has a peculiar problem in reconciling the demand for economy with the obvious plentifulness of cash. If the child does not notice the paradox his playmates will. His playmates' parents may or may not be so wealthy; but if not, they will be all the more apt to push their own children's expenditures to match the millionaire's; and the millionaire's efforts at simplicity for the children will be sneered at as eccentric or miserly. I recall hearing such comments about a millionaire family that kept its girls in cotton stockings.
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> Now the joke of this is that the children are right. A child's plane of living markedly out of harmony with that of its parents, whether above or below it, is socially anomalous and intolerable. The child is apt to suffer and the parents are subject to ridicule. Is there any way out of the dilemma?
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> For some families, probably not. Their habits, their ingrained assumptions, their entrenched commitments, and their vested interests are too much for them. Once having gone in for a palatial home, a corps of servants, and lavish entertaining, it is too difficult for them to turn back. Nobody would believe that they were doing it for the sake of their children. Those whose business seems to require them to use their home for "prospect contacts," as a selling adjunct, are in a peculiarly difficult position. Children thus trapped by their own parents' competitive spending are as pitiably disadvantaged as those of the poor, though in different ways.

This writer recommends that children be paid for certain types of work that may be done around the home—not the natural obligations of duties of performing one's share of work in normal upkeep, but "such tasks as the family might ordinarily hire help for, or have done 'outside'." "Children," he writes, "can get a sense of reality out of such a job, and with it the parent can work to good effect on the child's sense of workmanship and responsibility. Also, the child thus has a potential rival for his job. A child working on such tasks may be paid by the job slightly less than the adult if it is clear that his work is a bit inferior in quality or promptness; or he may be paid by the hour, at a rate lower than the adult's in proportion as he is slower or less careful. But he should not be grudged his actual market value. If this runs too high for the budget, it is easy to reduce the opportunities."

However, in the homes described as "wealthy," this is a very difficult sort of procedure to arrange:

> Among the servant-keeping class it is all too difficult to find appropriate tasks. A friend of mine on an estate near Philadelphia believed that her little girl should learn the value of money, the dignity of labor, and the habit of reliability; and all she could find at the moment for the child to do in her great menage was to arrange flowers in the living rooms. All went well until one day she found a maid trotting about re-arranging the crude attempts of the little girl. In another family an older boy, similarly placed, tipped the butler to do his job and kept the profits. And that, too, was an educational experience in standards of living!

The whole point about encouraging children to earn money to finance their personal enjoyments, or at least a portion of them, is to bring them in touch with certain matter-of-fact realities of the adult world and thus aid them to feel genuinely participant in their family and community modes of living. When, however, conditions are like those described above, the situation becomes artificial. This sociologist

makes the radical suggestion that extremely well-to-do parents should do their utmost to provide a *simpler* environment for the growing of their children, no matter what they can afford. Admitting that it is “a hard doctrine when one must suggest to such people for their children's sake they must actually escape from their own homes," he points out that some recognition of the psychological advantages of such a procedure is evidenced by "families who deliberately go for a part of each year to a simpler environment. As fortunate as rare is the wealthy but intelligent family which keeps its standard down to normal and does not permit its scale of living to isolate its children from their birthright of wide companionship."

In 1932, the discrepancy between "the homes of the wealthy" and the homes of "the average man," was much greater than at the present time, but the tendency toward leveling of incomes by no means solves the problem. More and more people have become members of the "managerial class," and the age of the managerial society is the age of excessive specialization. Fewer and fewer parents know how to take care of the appliances and appurtenances of their own homes, and, as a result, are seldom able to select tasks their progeny may perform. In other words, the danger of the "wealthy home" is not simply that it separates wealthy children from the normal experiences of their less-well-to-do playmates; it also leaves too few things to be done that have organic relatedness to the day-to-day living of the family. When the most important home-preserver is the electrician, who answers emergency calls in a pickup truck, you and your children are not apt to feel part of a cooperative enterprise.

This is a back-door way of discussing the value of "handcraft" for both parents and children, though, for the purposes we have in mind, it is the "handcraft" involved in practical repair work which is a matter of even greater importance than creative or artistic endeavors. Once again, we turn to Gandhian educational ideas. Many of the Indian children brought up under the Gandhian system eventually developed fine capacities as creative artists, but they *first* learned to perform the necessary and useful tasks of the home and the village. Today, all praise to the parent who can fix the plumbing, his car or the radio, and may he pass his responsible talent along to his children!

Yet another phase of "money-education" involves regular parent-supplied allowances. What seems a well-conceived suggestion on this is advanced in *Homes Build Persons,* by Dr. Garry C. Myers and Caroline Myers, originators of the monthly *Highlights For Children.* Dr. Myers gives the following "case history," apparently based upon experience with one of his own youngsters. Readers who find it difficult to follow through with a "home-earning" program may welcome the following suggestion:

> Here is how one child began an allowance at the age of nine. When school began, he was given ten cents a week to do with as he pleased. As he needed money for lunch or bus fare, he was given the money needed. He kept account of these regular expenditures for two weeks. Then he and his mother were able to know what his allowance, including the ten cents to do with as he pleased, should be for the week. Irregular expenditures for things like school supplies were not at first included, but were doled out as needed. A year later they were included.
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> He understood that for the specified regular expenditures plus luxuries, he would receive no more that week, that he would have to make it last. In a cardboard box he made bins, one for each school day, one for church school, and one for the dime. Upon receiving his allowance each Saturday, he distributed it in these bins. Some children use envelopes instead.
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> This child was not required to keep an itemized account of his expenditures. A few years later, he was induced to do so as a good business experience, not with the purpose of accounting to his parents. If, as many parents require, the child must show satisfactory accounts before receiving the next week's allowance, he is tempted to enter false records in order to make the records come out right, or to escape censure. By basing the allowance on the budget plan when the allowance is received, temptation to deceive by juggling records is removed.

FRONTIERS

An Afternoon With Krishnamurti

THERE are certain names which ring a bell in one's memory, starting generalized chords to vibrating without evoking any clear pattern or image. Krishnamurti is such a name.

When recently some friends announced their intention of spending a Saturday in Ojai and asked if I'd like to come along, I answered in the affirmative. From previous visits I remembered Ojai as a beautiful valley some seventy miles north of Hollywood, an ideal spot for a week-end expedition. More or less parenthetically I learned that the object of the drive was to listen to Krishnamurti. That was all right with me, too, once I had been assured that he would talk only one hour. The name was synonymous for me with mysticism. I can take mystics or leave them alone, but prefer, when circumstances bring me in touch with them, to be exposed to their message in brief doses.

We drove up in a Pontiac station wagon, all the available space filled with cans of beer on ice, bags of lunch, blankets, pillows, extra wraps, and painters. I was the only writer in the group, the others being pigment-spreaders of one school or another. As we sped through rugged hills and rolling fields, the conversation centered on mundane subjects like art shows, the cut-throat politics that control exhibitions, the inherited stupidity of all art judges, whether certain mountain shadows in the distance were purple or violet, and other topics unrelated to Krishnamurti. Occasionally I tried to steer the conversation around to the Indian mystic, for I felt uninformed about him and wanted to fill in the gaps without making a public confession of ignorance. But no one dropped any concrete facts with which my materialistic mind could grapple. I got the impression he was an aging messiah who had rebelled and abdicated. The painters contented themselves with generalized praise and admiration, calling him a “great soul" and an "original thinker." This attitude, unsupported by volunteered evidence, provoked me to a skeptical frame of mind, an attitude which doubtless is reflected in the critical nature of this report.

We travelled without incident beyond the usual stops for coffee and comfort stations, reaching Meiner's Oaks, a little village a few miles from Ojai and the site of the lecture, a half hour before the stipulated starting time. A narrow road led up to a grove. On both sides of the road were parked hundreds of cars. We parked our station wagon near a culvert at the bottom of the road, extracted cushions and blankets, and started the hike to the lecture grounds. The weather was ideal, the sun warm and bright, with a light breeze stirring the brownish-green grass of the fields that surrounded the grove of trees where Krishnamurti would talk.

Three or four hundred people had arrived ahead of us and were seated on the grass facing a small wooden table. A tape recorder and a box containing amplifying apparatus were on the table. Behind it sat two lean, rather saturnine men in their thirties. After scrutinizing them carefully I decided that neither of them was Krishnamurti. They had angular lines of practicality in their faces and I guessed they were technicians. Events proved I was fifty per cent correct. One operated the gadgets and the other was a secretary who made a brief introductory speech urging us not to smoke and telling us that pamphlets were for sale nearby.

After the secretary finished there was a hushed silence. Then a little man wearing gray slacks and a gray sport shirt with the top button unfastened stepped into position before two microphones, which hung suspended from the bough of an oak tree. (I think it was an oak, but suddenly I realize that Krishnamurti partisans may read this with an eye for errors and trip me up on just some such point as this. So I withdraw the oak, though it offends my stylistic sense to be forced to write a bare tree, simply because I was too lazy to notice its species.) Silently the man

looked out over the crowd. I looked around too and saw upturned faces like some strange new variety of flower, all in bloom at once, all turned in the same direction.

"I think it is very important that we learn how to listen," the little man said.

His voice was clear and quite high-pitched. His hair was a blackish-gray, wavy and longish (about the same length as that worn by the average male movie idol), parted in the middle over a broad forehead. His complexion was dark brown, a mahogany color. His nose, unlike that of many Orientals, was on the heavy side, straight and prominent. His eyebrows were heavy and well-arched. He stood erect, with his hands clasped in front of him. It was Krishnamurti.

"We don't know how to listen," he continued. "We tend to translate, to hear with our own particular biases. Most of us don't want to listen, because in listening we may discover what we are—whatever that may be."

To me this sounded true, though not particularly startling. I decided the best way I could test my own listening would be to take notes. I extracted pen and paper, to the accompaniment of disapproving looks from those in my neighborhood, and began jotting down observations. Later I was informed that note-taking was not encouraged since Krishnamurti records his talks and sells them. But nobody asked me to desist. Krishnamurti continued to discuss listening, amplifying what I have noted above, without saying anything more that seemed worth writing down.

I began to wonder what quality it was about him that had won him his devoted following. Thus far he had seemed more a showman than an intellectual. His figure was slender, almost boyish. He stood straight, with his eyebrows raised, the sun on his face lighting up his long upper lip, on which there was a beard shadow. I examined the crowd again. Women predominated. It is difficult for women to remain quiet very long in public, especially when sitting on the ground. The measure of Krishnamurti's hold over them was that they moved very little, only occasionally adjusting their clothes and touching their hair with the reassuring pats that seem instinctive to the sex when they fancy themselves under observation and want to make certain they are as attractive as art and nature will allow.

While watching the women I must have missed Krishnamurti's transition from the subject of listening to that of freedom. He was in favor of freedom and discussed it in hackneyed terms reminiscent of Franklin Roosevelt.

"We must achieve freedom from fear," he said. "The very term security implies fear. If one has no fear he will not think of being secure. The search for security is a search for freedom from fear. To achieve such a freedom requires a revolution in our thinking. Our educational system and our social structure are based upon fear."

Among the various sorts of freedom he mentioned as attainable were freedom from desire and ambition, and freedom from fear of what the neighbors will say.

Although this was perfectly sound, it struck me as lacking in freshness or originality. Perhaps, I thought, Krishnamurti's appeal lay in the simplicity of his ideas. Or perhaps it was the manner of their delivery. I watched him more carefully and noted he had an English accent, which seemed to add importance to his remarks. He paused frequently, hesitated, and seemed to be listening to himself. When he said something of more than routine significance he seemed surprised at himself, as if it had happened by accident, and then repeated it in different words, making sure it was not lost.

After a half hour he was still talking in general terms about fear. Without getting rid of fear, one cannot become an individual, he said. For an individual is unique and there is nothing unique about being fearful. One must get rid of

fear to be creative, for it is a crippling influence. The task of self-discovery requires patience, not quick judgment, he said. It requires meditation, quietness of spirit. Then there is a possibility of inward peace and outward happiness for man.

The sun dropped lower. The crowd remained spellbound. Krishnamurti switched from statements to questions. How, he asked, can one learn about right and wrong from books and lectures? Do not right and wrong vary for each person, with what is wrong for one being right for another? The questions were rhetorical, with the answers implied in the manner of their asking.

"The fear of making a mistake leads only to respectability," he said, and I put it in quotes and underlined it, for it struck me as a well-turned aphorism. To know what is true, inwardly, all the time, does not depend upon any belief, he said. Right and wrong are matters of social and cultural heritage.

"The mind, seeking security in success, must conform to what is right. But what is true is what is. So long as the mind is caught between the difficulty of what is right and what is wrong, it remains immature. It conforms, and conformity is the mark of the immature mind." I wondered about the validity of this. As a constitutional rebel, I approved of this condemnation of conformity. But at the same time I remembered that rebellion is largely a prerogative of the young and that as one grows older he tends to become more willing to conform, either because of maturity or because of a lack of the energy necessary to protest and defy conventions.

Forty minutes of the talk had passed at this point. My note-taking ended here and I day-dreamed, soaking up the sun, listening with half an ear, until the close of the lecture. After exactly an hour, Krishnamurti ended abruptly, turned and walked away, a lonely, self-contained figure.

A number of people rose to follow him. I asked a girl in my party to accompany me while I went up to talk with him but she demurred. She said it might be an imposition and a drain on his strength, that it wasn't fair to occupy his time unless one needed his help. From her tone as well as what she said I could see that she looked upon him as an extremely superior being and felt I was lacking in proper reverence. Nevertheless I strolled over and when the surge of people around him diminished for a moment I told him that I'd been hearing about him for years and that it was a pleasure to see him in the flesh.

There wasn't much he could reply to that but he smiled and murmured something, perhaps thank you. Seen close-up, he looked older and more delicate than when standing before the throng. His eye-lashes were long and his eyes clear and sharp, a trifle wary.

"I understand that you're an old friend of Annie Besant," I said.

He smiled again and said that she had first brought him to this country. I asked him something about his travels and he replied that he had just returned to Ojai from India by way of London. I asked what part of India and he mentioned the Himalayas. The remainder of our conversation was devoted to discussing the pronunciation of Himalayas, which he accented on the second syllable. By this time others were crowding around again and I relinquished my position as interlocutor and stepped back to listen to them. Mostly they were middle-aged women who came up to tell him how much they had enjoyed his speech, each of them taking about thirty seconds and saying approximately the same thing. He smiled graciously at each one and shook hands whenever one was profferred.

Back at the station wagon one of the painters told the others that I had bearded the prophet and I was required to repeat in detail my brief and trivial conversation with him. My recital, perhaps a trifle too ironic, sparked a dispute that lasted, with intermissions, all the way back to Hollywood. All the women and all the men except one, a vigorous young painter whose specialty was splashy geometrical abstractions,

sided against me. I was pretty well snowed under until someone incautiously compared Einstein unfavorably with Krishnamurti, at which the young painter took violent umbrage, for Einstein was one of his heroes. Energetically he went on the offensive. He attacked Krishnamurti as a dangerous charlatan and said his philosophy of passivity was a threat to progress. The dispute waxed acrimonious and I found myself in the middle. From an extremist at odds with everyone else my position was changed to that of a peace-maker, although an unintentional one. I had said earlier that Krishnamurti was a beneficial influence to the extent that he provoked his listeners to independent thinking about right and wrong, conformity and rebellion, love and hate, fear and freedom, and other philosophical problems. At the end of the long ride, and equally lengthy discussion, that seemed to be the minimum upon which all except the Einstein defender could agree.

Krishnamurti was scheduled to lecture for eight week ends. Several in the party said they planned to hear him again this year. But if I go along the next time, it will be strictly for the ride and the scenery.

RIDGELY CUMMINGS