

## THE GOOD IN MAN

THOSE who find the world badly in need of changing, and have some definite ideas on how it should be done, are often susceptible to a peculiar sort of uneasiness. It might be called "reformer's neurosis" or even the "revolutionary itch." Nathaniel Hawthorne must have realized something of this sort about a century ago when he wrote of the time he spent in the Transcendentalist colony at Brook Farm: "I was beginning to lose the sense of what kind of a world it was, among innumerable schemes of what it might be, or ought to be." He added:

No sagacious man will long retain his sagacity if he lives exclusively among reformers and progressive people without periodically returning into the settled system of things to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint.

The point of this remark is particularly applicable to the reformers who are system-changers or system-builders, for these men are usually intolerant of existing conditions, almost to the point of bigotry. To system-fascinated reformers, the kindly, unselfish man who exhibits no interest in the reformer's complaints and program often seems guilty of all the sins of his society, simply by association with them. One can agree that kindness and unselfishness, when they are merely personal qualities, are not enough to accomplish the great changes most reformers have in view; but it is also true that were kindness and unselfishness more widespread, many of the reforms envisioned would be practically unnecessary.

The study of the lives of radicals and reformers, as well as the personal experience that is more or less available to everyone, points to the wisdom of Plato's program of education described in the *Republic*. The Guardians, it will be remembered, had to undergo the most strenuous of disciplines, and they could not become rulers until they gave evidence of having already become philosophers. Philosophers, let us note, are not merely theorists;

they have wisdom and love of wisdom. And if we follow the allegory of the Cave, a further qualification for rulers is that they must distrust and dislike power, accepting it only with reluctance. It is only when they return to live among men because of an inner compulsion of wanting to *teach*, instead of to rule, that they can be trusted as Guardians.

Some may say that Plato was just another system-builder, cleverer than most. We think that he was not a system-builder, but a moral philosopher, and that the *Republic* is a searching analysis of the problems and psychology of moral education. The idea of a Utopia easily lends itself to this sort of analysis, although other Utopians have been beguiled by the desire to design The Perfect System, with results that have been seriously misleading for millions of their followers. From Rousseau to Marx and Hitler, the system-builders have converted countless enthusiasts to their dream of Progress, and among the various prices paid in the process has been the loss of the "sagacity" of which Hawthorne speaks.

Plato's "Guardians" have the role of the reformers in the *Republic*, which describes the building of a new society, not the tearing down of an old one. This is in itself instructive, for building requires very different talents and capacities from those needed for tearing down. A man with a bomb can destroy; a Committee of Public Safety with a guillotine can purge and cleanse; but only men who inspire trust and cooperation are able to build a new society. There are some situations where the qualities of resistance and rebellion seem altogether admirable—in a conscript society, for example. Conscription labor, "natives" working under conditions of colonial peonage, men subjected to any sort of total control over their lives are inclined to waste away into moral refuse unless they revolt. But after the revolt has been successful—then what? It is then that we see the importance of Plato's program for training the Guardians, and the reasons back of his

manifest admiration for the Spartan mode of existence.

Too often, rebels are unable to understand the intangibles of the good life—are unable to see the good in men despite the evil systems under which they live. The wonder of our time is not the incalculable destructiveness of our most powerful institutions, or the cultural delusions to which we pay fabulous tribute daily—the wonder is that there is so much in life that is tolerable, even enjoyable, despite these things.

What we are speaking of, here, makes the novels of Ignazio Silone almost required reading. For Silone, in *Bread and Wine* and *Seed Beneath the Snow*, has written extraordinary studies of the sustaining and enduring qualities of human beings, as contrasted with the credos and programs of the system-builders. True, in Italy under Fascism—and, we might add, in Italy after some fifteen hundred years of subjection to the Roman Church—these qualities seem to be all but lost. This is the horror and the tragedy which overtakes Spina, Silone's protagonist, and this, in the end, is what he sets himself against. Spina becomes a builder of simple trust. He tries to restore man's faith in man, in terms of personal kindness and unexpecting generosity.

This weakening of the very foundations of human relationships is not unique to Italy, of course, although Silone makes it appear more advanced in that country than in some other lands. Here, in the United States, everyone has noticed the decrease of integrity at various levels of human intercourse. Shoddy workmanship in manufactured articles is much commoner since the war. The promises made by businessmen are not taken as seriously as they used to be, and, what is perhaps more unfortunate, those to whom the promises are made often do not expect them to be kept. A kind of loose, indifferent "tolerance" toward slackness in human relationships of every sort has become virtually a rule of life.

Here and there, however, one finds representatives of the old school of thoroughgoing responsibility. There are still craftsmen who think more of their work than what they will be paid for it. There are still businessmen who would rather sell

their cars and mortgage their homes than leave their debts unpaid. There are still millions of people who sense that life without basic honesty is no longer human life, but some kind of shadow existence in a world where only subhuman qualities and values are admired. There is still spontaneous kindness to be met with in countless accidental or casual relationships. The further away one gets from the elaborate system of dependence upon public services and institutions, the more one encounters helpfulness, sympathy, and reliability. Actually, the principal objection to the so-called "Welfare State," quite apart from the criticisms of orthodox economists, is its depersonalization of a multitude of cooperative human relationships. The institutionalization of those qualities which make men sympathetic to one another's needs is really a disaster to human society, for the statistical approach to "welfare" tends to destroy the sense of community and the feeling of respect for others as *people*—especially when they are people who have experienced misfortune of one sort or another. This is not to suggest that the abolition of public assistance and other governmental welfare services would be a good thing—our dependence on the State has already gone too far for any sudden reform in this direction—but to indicate the basic weakness in the social philosophy which proposes that human needs can be effectively dealt with by corporate agencies.

A recent moving picture, *Bright Victory*, affords a good illustration of the problem of the modern, institutionalized society, providing, also, a just if somewhat idealized representation of the goodness of individuals. It is the story of a young American soldier—a more or less "typical" GI—who is blinded during an act of heroism while in combat in North Africa. He is brought home to an Army Hospital, the remainder of the film being devoted to his rehabilitation as a productive human being. The soldier's stay at the hospital, where most of the action takes place, is filled with those small kindnesses and evidences of personal consideration which tug at the heartstrings. The tragedy of the blind is something that we can all understand—we have only to close our eyes to experience the helplessness and feeling

of extraordinary loss which must come to every man who is blinded—and our sympathies flow easily to both those who cannot see and those who try to help them. No gadgets, however ingenious, no appropriations by Congress, however generous, can take the place of the human sympathy and understanding needed by the blind man. The problem is not to "take care of" the blind man, or to give him "security," but to help him to make a new kind of self-discovery—a discovery of resources which he had not even realized that he possessed.

Great personal kindness is present in this picture, and the generosity of spirit that men need from one another is there, too. But these emerge against the background of a tragedy more stark than even blindness—the tragedy of war. It is this, or something like it, that the reformer sees; and because all these kindly and generous people seem to regard the war as some sort of impersonal inevitability—not something that they can do anything about—the reformer tends to become indifferent toward the kindness which, although admirable in its place, seems to him to gloss over the ugly reality of war.

On the subject of war, *Bright Victory* offers nothing but heavy hanging silence. The shot that blinded the soldier might have been an accidental explosion, or a bolt of lightning, for all the notice taken of it as the cause of the tragedy. Here was a hospital filled with blind men, and there were hundreds of other hospitals—still are hundreds of hospitals filled with the casualties of war. There may be such "bright victories" for individuals, but they are individual victories salvaged from one vast, collective defeat. War, like the Holy Trinity during the Middle Ages, is one of the unmentionables. We may say that war is evil, war is hell, that war illustrates the failure of human beings to learn the lessons of life; but we may *not* say that this particular war is a terrible folly for these specific reasons, and ought to be stopped without controversy or debate. It is the reformer who dares to say the things the rest of us refuse to say, or even to think about. It is the reformer who is willing to go to prison for his utterance, as Bertrand Russell went to prison in England and Debs in the United States, during the first World War, and as many others went to prison

for their convictions, both then, and later, during World War II.

It is the policeman who deals with the crimes of the individual, but only the reformer or the revolutionary attempts to deal with the crimes of society, and for his pains the reformer is often charged with individual offenses and overtaken by the policeman. The reformer is bound to notice that the cultural delusions which lead to war often affect equally both the kind man and the brute. There are "good men and true" on the jury which convicts him, and the judge who pronounces sentence may be a man of the highest probity.

Small wonder, then, that these virtues, from the practice of which we obtain our feeling of moral security, may become a source of irritation to the reformer or the revolutionary. He wants to shock us out of our security. He wants us to see that our virtues, or the use we make of them, if not the cause of our larger failure, is surely connected with it.

There ought to be some way to formulate this problem so that its elemental factors will become clearer. Perhaps we could say that the virtues constitute some sort of natural endowment which comes into expression as the result of our being born. The virtues may be weak in some men, strong in others, but everyone has them. The natural garden for their cultivation is family and community life. The virtues can be made to atrophy by the invasion of the integrity of the family life by authoritarian controls or by any influence which has the effect of encouraging irresponsibility. Then, too, they may be forced into distorted channels by environmental conditioning—in war, for example, practically all the virtues are turned upside down, so far as the enemy is concerned. The soldier is trained to kill, disable, rob, and deceive the men on the opposing side. The top-ranking virtue for the soldier is unquestioning obedience. This is in contrast to the top-ranking virtue of the mature civilian in a democracy, which is to think for himself.

Perhaps we could say that there is one class of virtues which can be manipulated by conditioning, directed by propaganda, and even "aimed" by emotional stimulus; and that there is another class of

virtues, representing qualities of mind, which remain devoted to universal ideals, regardless of national hysteria and changing opinions. A Buddha, a Christ, a Socrates, or a Gandhi possesses these virtues or qualities. It might be better not to call them "virtues" at all, yet the kind of men we have in mind were not lacking in the personal virtues which adorn the lives of so many others. Perhaps we could say that great men have the capacity to extend the scope of their personal virtues by the longer radius of *vision*, until they gain an impersonal dimension, and that when this happens, the virtues of some men can never be turned against the virtues of others, as always occurs in war.

If it were easy to explain how it is that some rare individuals seem to be born with this vision, we should probably be able to produce moral geniuses at will, or at least know how to set in motion educational processes in which we would have sufficient confidence to keep them going. But, as a matter of fact, any sort of genius is very difficult to explain. The Christians seem to think that a man like Jesus is not merely rare, but absolutely unique, and must have been, therefore, the veritable Son of God. This is one way out of the difficulty, but it gets us into others which are worse, for it rules out the possibility of other men achieving the same development. The Buddhists—those Buddhists who have not succumbed to the temptation to make the great Gautama into another personal God—offer a reasoned hypothesis to the effect that a Buddha is the product of soul-evolution. This is a solution to which those who want a rational answer may incline. It involves, however, rather far-reaching metaphysical propositions concerning the nature of the soul and its metempsychooses. But if we turn to Socrates, that favorite of even the pragmatic moralists of the West, we find that Socrates, too, proposes the existence of the soul as a continuing thread of psycho-moral development. Plato, at any rate, sets forth this view in the Socratic dialogues—in the *Republic* and in the *Meno*—so that, quite possibly, we shall not be able to avoid at least *some* metaphysical entanglements in our search for an explanation of vision.

This discussion ought not to be concluded before noting the fact that it has been the reformers

and revolutionaries *without* a profound conviction about soul-development whose systems, when put into practice, have turned into prisons of human hope and aspiration. The successful socialist communities—and there have been one or two—have been communities with a religious inspiration. Those built upon plans for a perfect "economy" seem always to fail, possibly because of the fact that man is not primarily an "economic" being. It has been the materialist reformers, too, who have been most impatient of the ordinary virtues. True, we cannot build a better world with only these virtues, but without them we cannot even preserve the world we have, to say nothing of building a better one, so that revolution which neglects the humane qualities is really nothing more than a species of nihilism. Without vision, the people will perish, but they will perish as fast, or faster, if the "vision" we embrace is lacking in those qualities which enrich our day-to-day existence and give tangible evidence of man's love for man.

## Letter from JAPAN

TOKYO.—An era in Japanese history is rapidly coming to a close. Within a few months, the majority of the peace treaty signatories on the Far Eastern Commission will have gone through the process of ratifying the Japanese Peace Treaty, which will presumably restore full sovereignty to the Japanese nation.

The Japanese Occupation was purely an American Occupation. The predominating influence was American. It was not only run by Americans, but it was characterized in many ways by the imposition of the veneer of American manners and morals upon the subject people. Outwardly, there was the trend among the postwar Japanese to copy the gum-chewing, happy-go-lucky GI's. The term "*après-guerre*" became the popular name for young men and women of the postwar period who, on the surface, rid themselves of the old restrictions. Inwardly, however, there still remained the yearning for the past and customary ways.

No one will deny that the American Occupation did achieve tremendous good in some directions for the Japanese nation and people. But one must also admit that it is impossible for one nation to impose its way of doing things upon another with the complacent thought that it will work just because it has proved successful for the former nation. The process of weeding out the Occupation reforms which will not work from those which are desirable will doubtless become a major task of the post-treaty government.

Happily, the process has already been initiated under a wise Occupation policy, and an Administrative Order Review Commission is now reviewing the Occupation-sponsored laws and orders as to their retention and adaptability. Of course, it might be interpreted as a move to see what measures the Japanese will take after the treaty, and to check against a wholesale scrapping of the Occupation reforms. The Japanese

appreciate the fact that the procedure of review has been started while the Occupation is still going on, for there is the danger that the scrapping of Occupation measures in the post-treaty period may bring up the charge that Japan is reverting to her past militaristic ways—no matter how necessary and rational the changes may be.

One thing which must be recognized is that the success of the Occupation itself—and it was successful in many ways—lay in the fact that Japanese subservience to authority has actually changed very little. Thus, a real test will come when the authority of the Occupation is gone. To date, during the entirety of the Occupation period, the American Occupation authorities merely took over the role played by the former Japanese military and bureaucratic clique. Order was maintained and the people resigned themselves to innovations because it was the express command of the Occupation authorities. People did not smoke in the theaters, for instance, because the Occupation said so. Traffic rules were obeyed because it was the order of the Occupation. And actually, the Occupation authorities were able to have their pet reforms carried out—despite some instances of "sabotage" and reluctance—because the people were accustomed to obeying their superiors.

Thus, the real change may come after the Occupation is over. Many of the Japanese leaders, knowing all too well the Japanese respect for authority, are now fearful of the consequences following the end of the Occupation. Will the people obey the Japanese Government and its authorities as they did the Occupation and military regime preceding it? Will the government have to resort to a show of force in order to prove its "authority"? These fears are real because the Japanese Government has been discredited and so clearly has been taking its orders from the Occupation government.

This is an extremely important issue, since the Japanese Government and its leaders have been playing second fiddle so long that once the

Occupation is gone, the people may really feel that they are free to do what they please for the first time. And the dangerous aspect of this situation would be that the Japanese Government would be forced to assert itself through a show of force. If that should happen, Japan will have taken a step on the road back. On the other hand, if the Japanese people should accept the authority of their government as they have that of the Occupation, the six postwar years of so-called democratic enlightenment and freedom from totalitarianism would have been meaningless.

Admittedly, some of the people are more outspoken under the Occupation than they have ever been before, but the coming months will reveal eloquently what changes have been wrought in the Japanese people.

JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW IT'S ALMOST FUNNY

A REPORT in the London *Sunday Express*, coming to American readers by courtesy of the *Reader's Digest*, reminds us of a theme explored in one of the first articles appearing in these pages ("The Mechanical Man" MANAS, Feb. 25, 1948). While commenting upon the matter-of-factness with which most moderns periodically submit to a kind of reprocessing by political propaganda, the MANAS article remarked:

We know we are often robot cogs in political and economic systems we do not fully understand, we know we cease to have individual choice in a conscript army, and we simply shrug our shoulders. We may sigh bravely or snarl, but we accept without struggle. The process grinds out system after interlocked system, turns us over and plows us under, just as all the time we expected it would. We believe the propaganda of a political machine, discover a little later that the facts were misrepresented to us, and then allow ourselves to be propagandized again. Possibly we do not really believe half the propaganda that we say we believe, but we go on acting as if we believed it, because we suspect that propaganda, not truth, is the best we can get.

The *Reader's Digest* reports the exploits of Italian "human torpedoes" in the Mediterranean during World War II. Riding a strange submersible craft in two-man teams, the daredevil Italian divers penetrated the defenses of Gibraltar, fastened timed torpedo warheads to the keels of Allied vessels, and risked the harbor's submarines once again in thrilling escapes. One of the ships put out of action by these tactics was commanded by Vice Admiral Sir Charles Morgan, of the British Navy. In 1944, after the Italian armistice, the same Italians—just as courageously—operated against German shipping for the Allies, and sank a cruiser and a submarine. In March of 1945, Admiral Morgan pinned a medal upon the breast of the man who had ruined his ship a few years before.

This, we can say, is simply the "sporting attitude." But instances of this sort are obviously

something more, besides. Nearly everyone has listened to stories about men who have been separated from their homes and families in the Central European regions and carted off to fight for Germans or Russians, as the case may be; and we happen to know of one instance wherein brothers, seized at different times, were fighting on opposite sides of World War I. These brothers had no control over their fate, indicated no preference, and had no interest, either personal or social, in fighting for either side. But they were *fought* in the same way that a captured boat may be immediately put to use against its builders. These instances, we think, are simply illustrations of the way in which all modern warfare has become so depersonalized as to make it highly questionable to speak of anyone actually fighting for the dignity of "individual rights."

Dwight Macdonald, while editor of the now defunct *Politics*, collected a number of classic illustrations of this very point in an article entitled "The Responsibility of Peoples." Both ridiculous and tragic, his best illustration from World War II is worth some protracted pondering:

With their customary thoroughness, the Germans carried what might be called "collective irresponsibility" to its logical extreme. To cope with the Anglo-American armies poured into France after D-Day, they impressed great numbers of Poles, Russians, Frenchmen, Italians, Czechs, Georgians, Mongolians—most of them war prisoners given a choice between starvation and service in the Reichswehr. In some German regiments, the colonel needed an interpreter to make his commands understood. Even crack SS divisions were filled out with these foreign conscripts, all of whom, even the Mongolians, were officially listed as "Volksdeutsche." The Allies in France found themselves confronted by a veritable International in Reichswehr uniforms. Many of these "Volksdeutsche" shot their officers and came over to the Allied side at the first chance, giving our High Command a typical modern problem. Were they allies? (But they wore the German uniform.) Or were they prisoners? (But they hated the uniform they wore.) All that could be said with certainty is that they were fought on the German side. The passive verb is intentional: the modern soldier does

not "fight"; he "is fought," like a battleship or other inanimate mechanism.

The following story was related by George Orwell in his column in the Oct. 13 London *Tribune*:

"Among the German prisoners captured in France there are a certain number of Russians. Some time back two were captured who did not speak Russian or any other language that was known either to their captors or their fellow-prisoners. They could, in fact, only converse with one another. A professor of Slavonic languages, brought down from Oxford, could make nothing of what they were saying. Then it happened that a sergeant who had served on the frontiers of India overheard them talking and recognized their language, which he was able to speak a little. It was Tibetan! After some questioning he managed to get their story out of them.

"Some years earlier they had strayed over the frontier into the Soviet Union and been conscripted into a labour battalion, afterwards being sent to western Russia when the war with Germany broke out. They were taken prisoner by the Germans and sent to North Africa; later they were sent to France, then exchanged into a fighting unit when the Second Front opened, and taken prisoner by the British. All this time they had been able to speak to nobody but one another, and had no notion of what was happening or who was fighting whom.

"It would round the story off neatly if they were now conscripted into the British Army and sent to fight the Japanese, ending up somewhere in Central Asia, quite close to their native village, but still very much puzzled as to what it is all about."

It is not only permissible but imperative to call attention to the similarity between the experiences of the Tibetans and those of a considerable number of men now embarking for the Korean front. We have always, of course, had professional soldiering somewhere in the world, and even schoolboys and students of American history are familiar with Washington's battle against the hired Hessians during the war of 1776. But, today *everyone drafted* may be a professional soldier in much the same respect. That is, he is likely to have no self-generated loyalties.

It is "logical" enough for such conditions to exist in the twentieth century, but it is certainly destructive of the very intent of democracy to

accept all that these conditions imply with a mere shrug of the shoulders. Some of the "crazy anarchists" and the "crazy pacifists" seem to be the only ones who are determined to assert their individuality, who question all propaganda and all military alignments, and practice the *personal* ethic of non-cooperation with respect to any undertaking which they feel they know too little about to conscientiously approve.

## COMMENTARY IF ONLY . . .

THIS week's lead article speaks of the blinding and maiming of human beings in war, and Review presents a subtler view of war's inhumanities with the long quotation from Dwight Macdonald's *Politics*, recounting the story of the "two Tibetans." We in the United States have been considerably exercised, in recent months, by cases of mistreatment of Americans by Soviet-controlled authorities. A citizen of the United States, we say, ought to be able to go almost anywhere without fear, so long as he behaves himself. With his government to back him, he need take no injustice from any man or country.

There is something good about this, but why limit the idea to citizens of the United States? Why not feel the same way about anyone who is a human being—about the two Tibetans, for example?

We can't of course police the whole world. Our suggestion is rather that, if we could extend our *regard* for the welfare of American citizens to include all men, everywhere, there might be less need for policing, anywhere. Some years ago, during one of Europe's perennial wars, John Ruskin addressed the women of England:

The real, final reason for all the poverty, misery, and rage of battle, throughout Europe, is simply that you women, however good, however religious, however self-sacrificing for those whom you love, are too selfish and too thoughtless to take pains for any creature out of your own immediate circles. You fancy that you are sorry for the pain of others. Now I just tell you this, that if the usual course of war, instead of unroofing peasants' houses, and ravaging peasants' fields, merely broke the china upon your own drawing-room tables, no war in civilized countries would last a week.

Ruskin was probably exaggerating a bit for effect, and he could probably make just as good a case for a similar charge against the men, yet his general argument seems sound. Since he composed this charge, a lot more has been

smashed in England than the china on drawing-room tables, with the result that the English have a much greater hatred of war and fear of more war than the people of the United States. Actually, intelligent visitors from America to Europe almost to a man come back to tell us that the Europeans are very distrustful of American policy. As Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt is reported to have remarked recently, "I had no idea the people over there felt that way about us." We are behaving, they say, as though we *want* another World war.

But what, someone may ask, can *we* do about it? This question has been answered many times, but never better than by Leo Tolstoy, in *Christianity and Patriotism*:

If only free men would not rely on that which has not strength and power and is never free—on external power, but would believe in what is always powerful and free—in truth and the expression of it. If only men would boldly and clearly speak out the truth that has already been revealed to them of the brotherhood of all nations and the criminality of exclusive devotion to one's own nation, the dead false public opinion upon which all the power of Governments and all the evil produced by them rests would drop off of itself like dried skin, and make way for the new living public opinion which only waits that dropping off of the old husk that has confined it in order to assert its claims openly with authority, and to establish new forms of life that are in harmony with the consciences of men.

Men have only to understand that what is given out to them for public opinion, what is maintained by complicated, strenuous, and artificial means, is not public opinion, but only the dead relic of public opinion that once existed above all; they have but to believe in themselves, in the fact that what is recognized by them in the depths of their souls, that what craves expression in everyone is not freely uttered only because it runs counter to the existing social opinion, is the force which will change the world, and that to manifest that force is man's true vocation; men have but to believe that the truth is not what is said by men about them, but what a man's conscience, that is God, tells him—and the false, artificially maintained public opinion will vanish instantaneously and the true opinion will be established. . . .

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

MANY parents, especially those with strong religious backgrounds, are fond of the word "duty." So fond, that they propagandize the word unceasingly for the supposed benefit of their children. Duty becomes synonymous with Discipline, and restrictive Discipline is the very essence of education from most theological points of view.

We have often felt called upon to protest all of those "disciplines" which are contrived so that children may acquire the conventional virtues, unless they are in some way related to a spontaneous desire for participation on the part of the children. This reaction is based upon the feeling that self-discipline is the only kind of discipline worth having, all other kinds being like affected mannerisms; as soon as the external conditions prompting the adoption of the mannerism are altered they are immediately discarded.

We have recently discovered that one of Havelock Ellis' essays, "Children and Parents," makes instructive reading along these lines, and recommend it for all parents and teachers. Undesirable parents, according to Mr. Ellis, can be divided into two classes:

Those who act as if their children existed only for their benefit, and those who act as if they existed only for their children's benefit, the results being alike deplorable. For the first group of parents tyrannise over the child, seek to destroy its individuality, exercise an arbitrary discipline too spasmodic to have any of the good effects of discipline and would model him into a copy of themselves, though really, it ought to pain them very much to see themselves exactly copied. The second group of parents may wish to model their children not after themselves but after their ideals, yet they differ chiefly from the first class by their over-indulgence, by their anxiety to pamper the child by yielding to all his caprices and artificially protecting him from the natural results of those caprices, so that instead of learning freedom he has merely acquired self-will. These parents do not

indeed tyrannise over their children but they do worse; they train their children to be tyrants. Against these two tendencies of our century Ellen Key declares her own Alpha and Omega of the art of education. Try to leave the child in peace; live your own life beautifully, nobly, temperately, and in so living you will sufficiently teach your children to live.

Ellis proceeds to examine the implications of "undue tenderness" in its character of parental interference and over-management. "Under the name of Duty," Ellis writes, "the undue tenderness of a narrow family life developed in Feudal society until the family became increasingly self-centered." He continues:

. . . it was usually overlooked that the self-centered and enclosed family, even when the mutual affection of its members was real enough to bear all examination, could scarcely be more than partially beautiful, and could never be ideal. For the family only represents one aspect, however important an aspect, of a human being's functions and activities. He cannot, she cannot, be divorced from the life of the social group, and a life is beautiful and ideal, or the reverse, only when we have taken into our consideration the social as well as the family relationship. When the family claims to prevent the free association of an adult member of it with the larger social organisation, it is claiming that the part is greater than the whole, and such a claim cannot fail to be morbid and mischievous.

The old-world method of treating children, we know, has long ago been displaced as containing an element of harsh tyranny. But it was not perceived, and it seems indeed not even yet to be generally recognized, that the system which replaced it, and is only now beginning to pass away, involved another and more subtle tyranny, the more potent because not seemingly harsh. Parents no longer whipped their children even when grown up, or put them in seclusion, or exercised physical force upon them after they had passed childhood. They felt that that would not be in harmony with the social customs of a world in which ancient feudal notions were dead. But they merely replaced the external compulsion by an internal compulsion which was much more effective. It was based on the moral assumption of claims and duties which were rarely formulated because parents found it quite easy and pleasant to avoid formulating them, and children, on the rare occasions when they formulated them, usually felt a sense of guilt in challenging their validity. It was in the nineteenth

century that this state of things reached its full development.

This, we think, is a cogent summary of the way in which the concept of natural obligation has been transformed into authoritarian moralisms. The child can make educative and beneficial "sacrifices" only when he sees them to be such, and he cannot be blamed for not responding in the desired way to requests based purely on his parents' personal desires. The virtue of self-sacrifice has always been praised by parents, yet often such parents promptly show that they mean their children to be the ones who must practice that virtue—not themselves. Duty, in its highest sense, is that which is "due" to the whole of mankind, and its essence can only be realized through a large-minded view of the importance of one's relationship to every man and woman alive. Conduct within the small familial unit or the communal society must always be charted with an eye to this wider vision. Mr. Ellis' essay, near its conclusion, provides another excellent analysis:

In our human world, as we know, the moral duties laid upon us—the duties in which, if we fail, we become outcasts in our own eyes or in those of others or in both—are of three kinds: the duties to oneself, the duties to the small circle of those we love, and the duties to the larger circle of mankind to which ultimately we belong, since out of it we proceed, and to it we owe all that we are. There are no maxims, there is only an art and a difficult art, to harmonise duties which must often conflict. We have to be true to all the motives that sanctify our lives. . . . But the renunciation of the self is not the routine solution of every conflict, any more than is the absolute failure to renounce. In a certain sense the duty towards the self comes before all others, because it is the condition on which duties towards others possess any significance and worth. In that sense, it is true according to the familiar saying of Shakespeare,—though it was only Polonius, the man of maxims, who voiced it,—that one cannot be true to others unless one is first true to oneself, and that one can know nothing of giving aught that is worthy to give unless one also knows how to take. (*Little Essays on Love and Virtue*.)

While some of Ellis' ideas on "love" are both puzzling and questionable, he seems at least to

know a lot about what love is not. And, as is often remarked, it is nearly as important to know what a thing is not as to know what it is.

## FRONTIERS

### Figures on Life and Death

A BRIEF item in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for Nov. 17, 1951, reports what seems to be "great progress" for medical science in extending the lives of the people of the United States. The statistical facts are as follows:

The average length of life in the United States has increased to a record high of nearly 68 years, . . . The new figure, based upon final 1949 vital statistics compiled by the Public Health Service, shows a gain of almost half a year over the average lifetime indicated by 1948 death rates.

White women on the average live longer than any other group, outliving white men by more than five years. The average lifetime expected for white women at birth is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  years, while the average for white men is 65 years 11 months.

Negroes and other nonwhite groups have a shorter average life— $58\frac{1}{2}$  years for nonwhite men and 62 years 11 months for nonwhite women. Although white persons live longer than nonwhite, the difference has been sharply reduced. In 1900, whites outlived nonwhites by an average of about 15 years, compared with about 8 years in 1949.

While the expectation of life at birth has increased by more than 20 years since the turn of the century, there has been no significant change in the average lifetime remaining to those who have reached age 65 or 70.

These figures are of interest from several viewpoints. The rapid increase in life expectancy for Negroes, for one thing, doubtless reflects improved economic conditions for the nonwhite population. If the gap in life expectancy between the two races can be entirely closed during the next twenty-five years, the chances are that we will have gone far in eliminating the unjust conditions imposed upon Negroes by race prejudice.

Of still greater interest is the information contained in the last paragraph of the quoted report. If anything, the facts concerning the life expectancy of those past middle age are understated. These facts are given much more

completely, with accompanying analysis, in the December, 1951 number of *Prevention* (a new health magazine issued by the publishers of *Organic Gardening*, Emmaus, Pennsylvania). Following is the table of life expectancy for white males in the United States, from 1850 to 1947, for the decennial ages of life:

PERIOD	AGE					
	0	10	40	50	60	70
1850	38.3	48.0	27.9	21.6	15.6	10.2
1900-2	48.23	50.59	27.74	20.76	14.35	9.03
1947	65.16	58.14	30.57	22.32	15.30	9.71

The comments of Dr. Wilfred N. Sisk, head of the Department of Industrial Health, the Upjohn Co., Kalamazoo, Mich., sharpen the picture considerably:

If one were to take seriously many of the glowing articles which appear in the usual run of newspapers and periodicals, one would think that the job of prevention and cure of disease had been done and that there is little left to be accomplished. . . . What does not usually reach the headlines is the fact that all this progress, fine as it is, is chiefly of benefit to the person under 30 years of age and particularly to the child under 10 years of age . . .

The above figures mean of course that much has been done in the improvement of the health of small children. Let us contrast that with the expectancy at age 40. In 1850 white men who lived to be 40 years old could expect on the average to live 27.9 years longer or to a total age of 67.9. In 1900 the expectancy had actually decreased to 27.7 total age of 67.7) while in 1947 it had only increased to 30.6 (total age of 70.6). Thus we can see that for men who lived to be 40 years of age the life expectancy had only increased 2.7 years in virtually 100 years. This is certainly not much to be proud of. At age so the life expectancy is no better. In 1850 a man age 50 could expect to live 21.6 more years (to a total age of 71.6 years) whereas in 1900 he could expect 20.8 years (total age 70.8 years) and in 1947 the expectancy was 22.3 years (total age 72.3 years). In almost 100 years we have improved the picture for age 50 by only 1.3 years. As you will see from the

table, for age 60 and 70 we have actually lost ground. The death rates in 1850 were better than those today.

Here we have a very neat problem. Why are we able to do so much for infants and small children and so little for people over 40?

Dr. Sisk's answer to this question is quite simple. It is that the people of the United States are eating food depleted of essential vitamins. In consequence, they suffer from faulty metabolism, due to the partial failure of the enzyme system of the body. Allergic disturbances, cancer, stomach ulcers, kidney disease, certain types of high blood pressure, and coronary thrombosis are among the diseases which are related, in Dr. Sisk's opinion, to the lack of essential vitamins. He also suggests that "we are poisoning ourselves by too many sulfur-containing compounds in the food we eat, as well as by too many poisonous sprays on our fruits and vegetables."

Much of this article is devoted to presenting what evidence is available for the idea that organically grown food will give natural immunity to the degenerative diseases of poor metabolism. The evidence, of course, is fragmentary, and suggestive rather than conclusive. The fact is that these doctrines are relatively new, and it will take time to accumulate "proof" in a form acceptable to other scientists. For those who incline to natural methods anyway, there are considerations like the following:

Multiple sclerosis is a disease which causes about the same amount of deaths and crippling in the United States as does poliomyelitis. It is thought to be closely related to the allergic diseases, if it is not actually an allergy itself. Multiple sclerosis, while rather prevalent in the United States and in Europe, is virtually absent in China, India and Japan, where at least until recent years, chemical fertilizers were little if at all used. Dr. Randolph of Chicago tells me that Chinese residents (graduate physicians taking extra training in this country) who see his patients with allergic food reactions are quite amazed. He states that they find no such disease as this in China.

One other phase of this question should have notice. Often the "glowing articles" about the progress of medicine, to which Dr. Sisk refers,

praise the alleged achievements of vaccine and serum therapy as responsible for the reduction of infectious disease—again, a type of disease to which children are especially susceptible. What these articles seldom point out is that, along with the development of artificial immunizing techniques, there have been two other important factors at work. One is the marked progress in sanitation; the other is the long-term decline in the virulence of infectious diseases, quite apart from preventive measures and treatment of them. As a writer in a U.S. Public Health Service Report of years ago (Jan. 13, 1933) observed: "Reduced virulence of many communicable diseases is one of the world-wide tendencies of the present epoch." This writer, Rollo H. Britten, notes the decline in deaths from tuberculosis, placing this trend among "the outstanding facts in our medical history." In 1900, the leading cause of death in the United States was tuberculosis; today, tuberculosis is seventh among the major causes of mortality. The important fact, here, is that deaths from tuberculosis have been enormously reduced *without* any specific cure for this disease. Accordingly, the general decline in infectious diseases, together with better sanitation and improved living standards, is probably responsible for this notable gain.

Meanwhile, the degenerative diseases which attack people in middle age and after have become the new and more insidious threat to health. So far, the available diagnoses suggest an indictment of our entire way of life—physical, emotional, and mental—as responsible.