

TWO LEVELS OF REPLY

MANAS has one or two readers who periodically give expression to their distaste for the almost uninterrupted discussion of the problem of war. Why, they ask, so much attention to this question? Are there not more enduring issues to be examined, or matters of deep concern to the individual which remain important regardless of what the world may do for or against war?

We might begin by saying that we should like nothing better than to discuss such matters more frequently, even to the point of excluding the problems of world politics, but are prevented from doing so by what seem major considerations. First, as children of our age, we share with many others the psychological inability to conceive of a private and personal good which is really good. It is this strong social consciousness which always rises—like Hope, the last escapee from Pandora's Box—after you look at all the depressing evils of the twentieth century. The people of this age *have* to think socially. The connection of the individual with the community and with the whole human family is the moral inspiration of our time. What sort of a man would he be who felt he could work out a satisfactory philosophy which ignored the prospective agony for a large part if not the whole of the human race? Who would want to go to a heaven, here or hereafter, that remained unpeopled by the victims of a universal slaughter?

This is the short answer, the simple answer.

There is another answer, a long and more complicated one, which may be made to those who take the high ground of spiritual philosophy—who propose that one can love and feel unity with everyone without submitting to the preoccupations of fear and longing for physical "security." This longer answer must be made to those who argue, for example, that all this concern about survival is a species of materialism. Let us be up and doing in creative fields, ready to live or die, as the case may be. If the Madmen blow up the world, truth and

beauty will surely go on. It would be sheer egotism to believe that, in the infinite reaches of past time, similar crises had not occurred and been surmounted by the on-going forces of the universe. Why must we allow a temporal evil to poison the eternal good? And so forth.

It is possible to agree in principle with this practically celestial outlook and still demur. It is possible to propose, even from a transcendental viewpoint, that a real process of human growth is represented by the current crisis, and that a refusal to attempt to understand that meaning of the crisis could help to defeat its purpose.

Words have a way of turning pompous on the one who uses them. A "crisis," for one thing, can hardly be said to have a purpose. On the other hand, if you take the view that general human experiences have a general meaning for all mankind, some kind of particular meaning or "purpose" inhabits the circumstances of every extreme situation.

Take for example the present. Large numbers of people in the West are deeply shaken by what seems to them a threat to all that they doctrinally or traditionally hold dear, or believe they hold dear, or believe they are *supposed* to hold dear. They are obliged to consider a sort of question that earlier centuries of history in this epoch have never presented to any population group of comparable size. In the United States, the young have always grown to maturity secure in the belief that they are members of a social order which represents the forces of Goodness and Progress. Added to this has been the further belief that Goodness and Progress, supported, if need be, by righteous force of arms, will inevitably triumph over every evil tendency. This vague faith, half metaphysic, half ideology, has been communicated from one generation of Americans to another by a kind of osmosis. The country, the nation, the land, has seemed a natural matrix for the fulfillment of this dream. Parents, teachers, community leaders, politicians, statesmen,

editors, and public figures of every sort all contribute to the consistency in feeling of this matrix, which for generations has formed the cultural environment of the young in the United States.

Today, however, unsettling doubts have arisen from a variety of causes. Most obvious is the question of whether, in fact, the righteous force of arms is in fact sufficient to overwhelm the evil that is believed to threaten in so many quarters of the world. The simple prospect of struggle, of sacrifice and pain, would not disturb anyone nurtured in the American tradition, since these aspects of experience, as everyone knows, call out The Best in human beings. But if the *happy ending* of the contest can be doubted—or even questioned at all—the entire dream of Goodness and Progress is shaken to its roots. When this happens, all the phenomena of anxiety appear. Some people, usually a small minority, begin a rational reevaluation of the elements of the dream, hoping by constructive revision to make it conform more closely to the actual processes of life, while retaining a happy ending which can actually be realized by human effort. Others who, without thinking much about it, have assumed that an essential benevolence is built into their cultural and historical environment, experience profound fright. They may have courage and a kind of rudimentary idealism, but they find it difficult, if not impossible, to relate these weak moral qualities to a situation calling for original thinking and unaccustomed action. An enormous pressure of emotional resistance, not to change, but to an evaluation of avenues, alternatives, and possibilities of change, is built up in these people. What is at issue is the relation of man to the world, which involves questions of identity, cosmology, human origin and destiny. Now men take either a rational or an irrational view of these questions. That is, either a rational or an irrational attitude preponderates in regard to them. The rational attitude is basically an attitude of investigation and discovery toward all important questions, while the irrational attitude inclines to rigid judgments of "correct" and "incorrect" concerning supposed answers to the questions. The loyalty of the rational man is to what we may as well call the scientific spirit, while the

loyalty of the irrational is to those persons, human or divine, who have supplied us with the correct answers to questions about identity and cosmology.

The foregoing is of course an enormous oversimplification. Irrational attitudes toward ultimate questions are always honeycombed with limited expressions of rationality, and the best of the rational men are obliged to concede that many of their most careful formulations rest, ultimately, on grounds of intuitive assumption. You might say that the irrational aspect of human judgments ought to be divided into judgments which spring from fear or other negative emotions, and judgments which proceed from daring and a high confidence in the potentialities of the human spirit.

The endless combinations of these numerous and ramifying elements in human thought and decision produce equally endless differentiations in the attitudes of people, with the result that analysis and criticism often break down, turning into angry denunciation and propaganda. What we need, in this case, is common denominators which simplify without oversimplifying, and generalizations which clarify and organize thought without classifying people arbitrarily and doing inevitable injustice. Perhaps, instead of dividing the population into "rational" and "irrational" segments, we could say that the critical decision for human beings concerns the locus of power. Is it in individuals or in institutions? Is it in man or in some outside force, such as God, or the State, on whom man must confess he is dependent?

We ought to qualify this question by making it refer only to the source of rational power—power, that is, which can be related to thinking about human purpose. There are many sources of non-rational power—the sun, the weather, rivers, oil and mineral deposits. But the source of rational power affords power which can direct events toward fulfillment which has meaning for mankind. Revolution, you could say, is an attempt by a number of human beings to change the locus of power, both conceptually and practically, in their society. The idea of rational power includes of course the idea of authority, since the exercise of power depends upon authority.

Religions and theories of government have in common that both are concerned with the locus of power and the source of authority. The eighteenth century was a time of extraordinary revolution, during which the locus of power and authority was moved from hereditary monarchs to assemblies, legislatures, and popularly elected representatives of the people. The Reformation, which had taken place two hundred years before, accomplished a similar transfer of power and authority from the Roman Church, partly to the Christian individual and partly to the various multiplying Protestant institutions.

Tremendous historical adjustments must always follow epochs of revolution. New institutional arrangements, calculated to implement the flow of power and authority from the new sources the revolution has established, take time to develop all the practical relationships which a going society involves. As this process of adjustment proceeds, the revolutionary philosophy is slowly transformed into a cultural tradition. It is, so to say, "naturalized" by the people for whom it has become the rule of life. The gains of the revolution are "consolidated" and at the same time people have opportunity to see the difference between the Utopian dream which was implicit in the arguments for the revolution and the actual society which resulted. However, in the case of the American Revolution, there was probably less visionary myth than hard-headed thinking and argument, with the result that the gains for human society it brought about were great and dramatic, while the disillusionments, which eventually appeared, were more a consequence of the emergence of new problems than an exposure of false or unrealistic revolutionary propaganda.

While historical dilemmas and crises of varying intensity attended the nineteenth-century development of the American Republic, there was no event which could not be fitted into the Goodness and Progress myth subscribed to by the great mass of the American people. Not until the twentieth century—indeed, not until the midpoint of the twentieth century, after the end of World War II—was there any serious questioning of the validity of this myth, so far as American destiny is concerned. Today, however, the questioning is intense.

The questioning takes place at various levels, with various degrees of rational intelligibility. For example, there is the following, taken from the annual report (for 1959-60) of the President of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, in which Mr. Hutchins speaks of the object of the Center:

In the present state of the world the importance of an attempt to find out how to make democracy work seems self-evident. It certainly is not self-evident that democracy will work: it is having a hard time everywhere. So much is this the case that there is increasing talk about its impossibility under contemporary conditions. The notion is that contemporary problems are so complicated, technical, and critical that even if all the people were highly educated and well informed they could not be trusted to find their way. Since we know that in many parts of the world, including the United States, it will be a long time before people are highly educated and well informed, it is said that we can predict nothing but disaster from the continued reliance on democratic forms. Toying with democracy is thought particularly dangerous for new countries without an established political tradition, where the citizens have not much education or information, and where natural resources are often inadequate to the economic aspirations of the people.

The Center is committed to the proposition that democracy is the best form of government. The Center does not believe that the difficulties of democracy show that it is wrong in principle or inapplicable to the needs of people everywhere today. These difficulties, in the view of the Center, result from the failure to understand the principles of democracy. This is an intellectual failure. Our situation has changed too fast for our ideas. What passes for ideas, or democratic theory, in the United States often turns out to be a collection of eighteenth-century phrases that had great vitality in their day, but that have been allowed to degenerate into slogans. A slogan is something that can be repeated over and over without putting any strain on the intelligence. The object of the Center is to restore vitality to democratic principles by applying such intelligence as it can command to the re-examination of these principles in the light (or darkness) of the modern world.

What, precisely, is democracy? For our purposes, the most primitive of definitions will do, such as the literal meaning of the Greek words out of

which Democracy is made. This literal meaning is that *the people have the strength to rule*. The locus of power is in the people. In other words, the power and the authority for the ordering of men's lives rest in the men themselves. The immediate problem, for believers in democracy, is to accept the confrontations of the present described by Mr. Hutchins and try to work out ways in which human society can continue without suffering another change in the locus of power—a change which takes the power of the initiative away from the people and places it elsewhere.

But this is only one aspect of the questioning process that is now going on. It would be a mistake to suggest that the sober rationalism of the Center for Democratic Studies is characteristic of the people in general. Much more common are vague apprehensions growing out of the obvious military threat of Soviet armed might and the anxieties bred by such activities as civil defense drills—carried even to the point of requiring elementary school children to crawl under desks. The compulsions of military defense and the psychological accompaniments of "security" measures conspire to create an atmosphere of inadequacy and even failure of the myth of Goodness and Progress. Freedom cannot prosper in such circumstances. The young begin to wonder about their future—and whether they *have* a future—while the older generation tends to regard the questioning of the young as perverse.

In short, the matrix of the cultural environment is no longer hospitable to the traditional American dream. The myth of Goodness and Progress is no longer supported by the trend of events. It is becoming increasingly common for people to ask what sort of a world we are living in, if dreadful things like atomic war and the spread of the tyrannical communist creed must occupy the foreground of our attention, with little or no hope of a change for the better.

It is only a short step from asking what kind of a world this is, to asking what kind of people we are, and whether it is possible to continue believing in the things we were taught to believe in as children. And this, we submit, is the real crisis of the present, in human affairs.

The myth is an imaginative generalization of human hopes, aspirations, and intuitions about the nature of things. It includes a feeling account of the world and of the self. The slogan is a materialized, degraded fragment of the myth, tailored by propagandists for use in the manipulation of human feelings. The slogan is also, of course, an oversimplification of the myth by the people themselves, and in times of confusion slogans gain an inordinate importance because of the natural human longing for simple explanation. The slogan, as Mr. Hutchins points out, is "something that can be repeated over and over again without putting any strain on the intelligence," and when people place too much confidence in the repetition of slogans, they become the natural prey of propagandists.

So, this is the end of the long answer to the question of why we are unable to ignore the problem of war and the complex situations which have arisen in connection with the threat of war. Profoundly related to the way in which people meet and deal with this problem is the question of human identity and the nature of man. Although you may believe that man is a spiritual essence, that before him lies the promise of immortal life, and that such issues as to survive in a nuclear war are not the crucial issues of human existence, what the individual thinks himself to be, and what he thinks of the meaning of the world around him *are* crucial issues. The agonizing question of war presses these latter issues upon him. A man may have a high spiritual life apart from the demands of the State, but that life is not only in another world or in some future embodiment. If the principles of a spiritual life have no application here, on the battleground of massive human relations, the whole enterprise of our earthly existence is rendered meaningless.

REVIEW

SHANKARA ON SELFHOOD

WITHIN recent years many Western writers and scholars have paid high tributes to the achievements and influence of the eighth-century Vedantist philosopher, Shankara. Aldous Huxley, for example, in his introduction to the Prabhavananda-Isherwood translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, judged the *Gita* "perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy" and Shankara its greatest Indian commentator. Selwyn D. Champion and Dorothy Short (*Readings from World Religions*) credit Shankara with developing furthest, and finally fixing, the Upanishad philosophy: "To him we owe the theory of Maya, or Illusion . . . and on his version of the Upanishad philosophy modern Hinduism rests." With this appraisal Prabhavananda and Manchester, in their translation of the Upanishads agree. They find Shankara's commentaries on the sixteen "authentic and authoritative" Upanishads (from the one hundred and eight extant) the critical norm for their translation and "the primary object of attention for all who would know the Hindu religion." Again, W. T. Stace (*Teachings of the Great Mystics*) follows R. B. Blakney in likening Shankara to Meister Eckhart; Frederic Spiegelberg (*Living Religions of the World*) considers him "a major reformer . . . chiefly responsible for the monastic system as it exists in India today"; Alan W. Watts (*The Way of Zen*) employs Shankara's formulation to explain "knowledge of Brahman"—a concept usually puzzling to Western thinkers; and Houston Smith (*The Religions of Man*) calls Shankara "the St. Thomas Aquinas of Hinduism."

Admittedly, these tributes will be meaningful to most of us only insofar as we have some knowledge of Shankara's philosophy before we come across them. With that knowledge, however preliminary and incomplete, we have a basis for making comparisons, deriving insights, forming attitudes, and drawing conclusions.

Without that knowledge, we come out nowhere; we become bogged down and baffled by a great terminological morass on the one hand, and a genuine philosophical confusion on the other. These we need to distinguish. We might call them the *interpretative* and the *reflective* difficulties. Though they often overlap, they do not coincide: they seem to require resolution at different levels. That is, given any statement—not merely statements with metaphysical intent, but *any* statement—we can assume that even after all semantic snarls have been worked out and we claim we know what the statement means, we still may not know how much or how little of this meaning was intended by the statement-maker. Now, in Indian philosophy, the ways of making meaningful statements, as well as the results the maker hopes to achieve, may strike us—even after sophisticated forewarnings—as extremely odd. (I once had the temerity to suggest, before an informal gathering, that Indian philosophy had a logic. This, I said, did not agree in some of its fundamental assumptions with the ordinary Western "Aristotelian" logic, but what I knew of it "made sense" to me and apparently provided an intellectual discipline for professional philosophers. When I finished trying to explain, I found several persons staring at me as if the Great Auk had suddenly emerged from my mouth. Perhaps the conjunction of "Indian philosophy" and "logic" was too much for them.)

Maintaining a balance between resolutions of interpretative and reflective difficulties in Shankara's philosophy is the major challenge confronting Y. Keshava Menon and Richard F. Allen in *The Pure Principle: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Shankara* (Michigan State University Press, \$3.50). That they meet this challenge with a fair degree of success is due in part, I believe, to a decision they make and hold to from the outset. The decision involves dealing compassionately but firmly with certain misconceptions and malconceptions of Indian philosophy prevalent in the West:

There is in many quarters—even among otherwise well-educated people—a rooted prejudice against Indian philosophy. It is felt to be vague, "mystical" (i.e., misty) and incomprehensibly foreign ("East is East and West is West"); it is sinister (thugs and green-eyed yellow gods); and it is rather ridiculous. The European has a basic mental picture of an Indian philosopher as an emaciated Gandhi-like person, sitting on the ground contemplating his big toe, and propounding over-simplified riddles about elephants, banyan trees and other exotic flora and fauna to the sound of weird nasal chanting. The other surrounding associations are intolerable heat, dirt, cholera and snakes. The peculiar relationship of Great Britain to India during the long period of the British occupation has had something to do with this attitude, but now that India is a free and equal member of the Commonwealth, British students have an opportunity of looking afresh and impartially at the very ancient, but at the same time startlingly modern, culture of the Indian sub-continent. There are, of course, heat, dirt, cholera and snakes in some parts of India—just as there are fog, dirt, tuberculosis and sewer rats in some parts of England. The many different races who live in the Indian sub-continent have—and always have had—the same basic problems to face as other human beings, and have brought the same mind and the same courage to the struggle. The surface of the Indian philosophers' daily scene is different, but they, too, have hunted to find a rational explanation of their mixed allocation of pain and pleasure with the same unwearying persistence that has always made philosophers philosophize in every land—however much they appear to study out of pure intellectual interest.

Menon and Allen address *The Pure Principle* to a small but significant body of readers, "primarily to Western students having some acquaintance with the terminology and approach of European philosophy." They develop their exposition of Shankara's philosophy in terms of his commentaries on the Upanishads, a "metrical-cum-prose work" called *Upadesahasasri*, a long poem called *Viveka-chudamani*, and some Vedic hymns. This body of work, especially the Upanishad commentaries, they consider Shankara's great contribution to Indian philosophy and religion. They use what seems a bare minimum of Sanskrit terms, but show a commendable wariness in drawing easy analogies

between Indian and European conceptions. Throughout, they examine Shankara's thought as a coherent position; they present it as a live option, a tenable way of life. This position involves a set of reasoned commitments—epistemological, cosmological, ethical, and political. But it is a position for seekers—not for dilettantes, or self-mourners, or stand-patters—as Menon and Allen make clear.

Underlying the entire exposition, however, is Shankara's conception of "the pure principle": the achievement of selfhood. This is the fundamental principle of Shankara's teaching. For him, the pure, innermost Self is the ultimate reality; but this Self must not be confused with the "ego." Instead, it should be conceived as a "spiritual kernel" of the same kind as Brahman or God, the ultimate reality. When a man plucks the thorn of *avidya* or ignorance from himself, he grasps intuitively all external phenomena as the Universe—and the Universe as merely an external phenomenon. He then realizes the identity between the Self and Brahman; and in this realization he becomes a "liberated" soul, waiting only for his final liberation from the body by death. But this waiting is an active waiting; for the Self has been liberated not only *from* but *for* something, a new commitment which Shankara calls "the acquisition of right knowledge."

In developing his position up to this point Shankara is not, according to Menon and Allen, "anti-rational":

Reason as applied to the facts of experiment is to him an indispensable means in the search after reality, but reason has to be employed only as the tool of intuition, as a critical weapon for testing raw assumptions. Even the scriptures are not exempt from critical examinations; they, too, must be rational and Shankara is at pains to show that they are.

Similarly, Shankara is not "anti-empirical"; he finds perception also valid in its proper field:

In those realms of inquiry that are open to perception and inference scripture [for Shankara] is reckoned as unimportant. Scripture must also conform to the observed facts, which bear the mark of

certitude through direct experience: even scripture has no right to say that fire is cold. "The purpose of the scriptural text is not to alter existing things, but to reveal them as they really are.'

Shankara, then, begins by accepting "the commonsense view of the world that each of us exists as a separate individual who is 'conscious'." Obviously, though, the commonsense view involves a puzzle:

In a certain sense, all that "I" see—the earth, the trees, the stars, other people—is "in" my "mind." On the other hand, my "mind" is, in the commonsense view, situated somewhere inside my body, which moves about in this world of earth and trees and stars and other people. In short, my mind is in the world and the world is in my mind. How are we to solve this puzzle? It is not purely verbal. To attempt a solution, we must try to answer such questions as: What is my mind, and exactly where is it? What does the word "I" mean? Is it my body, my intellect, my "soul", or what? Where, for example, do "I" go when "I" am asleep?

Menon and Allen use these questions as starting-points for their clarification of Shankara's view of the Self, which constitutes the first third of *The Pure Principle*. They devote the rest of their exposition to an application of Shankara's "Self in Three States" to ethical and political problems. Here, their focal point of interest is a cluster of problems arising from, and tending to perpetuate, the present conditions of Western industrial society. They could hardly have chosen a field of inquiry better fitted to demonstrate the relevancy to us of Shankara's over-all achievement.

A book as well-conceived in collaboration as this one, and as justified in its claim to be an introduction, is not likely to be a happenchance. Its authors bring to it a body of insights, illustrations, and expository skills resulting from friendship and the sense of breaking new, significant ground. Y. Keshava Menon, born in Chittur-Cochin on the southwest coast of India, was educated at the Christian College, Madras. Early in his life he became drawn into the vortex of Indian political activity, was finally arrested,

and while serving a sentence from 1943 to 1945 in the Nasik Central Prison assembled most of the material for this book. Richard F. Allen, born in Canterbury, England, received a physics degree from London University. His research did not prevent him from developing his interest in the significance of Indian non-dualist philosophy to the West. In 1951 he met Menon. They immediately decided to collaborate in presenting the results of Menon's studies in a form suitable for Western readers. Of this collaboration *The Pure Principle* is the first fruit: a good harvest and, we hope, not the last.

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COMMENTARY

KOINONIA NEWSLETTER

KOINONIA is an interracial, cooperative community in Americus, Georgia. It was started in 1943 by committed Christians who determined to spend their lives in an attempt to practice gospel precepts. The people of the community were never exactly popular with their Deep South neighbors, although there were experiences which made the members feel that their efforts were worth while; but when, in 1956, one of the founders, Clarence Jordan, helped two Negroes to enter the Georgia State College, a cycle of bitter and violent attacks on Koinonia began. The community was bombed, dynamited, and swept with machine-gun fire. Various boycotts were instituted against them, making their economic survival almost impossible.

The people of Koinonia did not give up. They changed their way of life to adapt to economic activities which would make them more independent of their immediate neighbors. They worked up a mail order business for their cured hams (write for price list) and went into pecan processing, which has a market entirely outside Georgia. The financing of this venture, for which some \$50,000 worth of equipment was required, was handled by cooperative loans by friends and sympathizers all over the country.

Koinonia *Newsletter* No. 24 (April, 1961) relates how the attempt of the Americus High School to bar three children from Koinonia finally failed when the case came before a federal court in Macon. The Koinonia school board had held that it could exclude children because of "the religious and social beliefs of their parents." The *Newsletter* relates:

For the first time, we were able to testify openly and publicly before a qualified court as to our manner of life and the Christian principles on which it is based. . . . Before the day was over, the School Board had practically admitted its discrimination against the children.

The court ruled to restrain the Board permanently from refusing admission to Koinonia children. When it came time for the children to enter the school, the parents rejected suggestions that a federal marshal accompany them. "This," says the *Newsletter*, "not only would have been contrary to our opposition to the use of force, but would have betrayed a lack of faith in the people of Americus and in the school officials. There was no incident then, nor has there been any since. For the most part, the other pupils received them and apart from a few anonymous notes and cold shoulders, they have experienced little difficulty. The teachers have been kind and understanding."

No. 24 of the *Newsletter* has an interesting supplement telling about the serious difficulties of the Negro community, "Freedom Village," near Somerville, Tennessee, where Negro renters and sharecroppers evicted for daring to vote have found haven on land belonging to a Negro farmer. There 155 people are living in twenty-two tents. Copies of the *Newsletter* and the supplement may be obtained from Koinonia Community, Route '2, Americus, Georgia.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves MY BIG GIRL

[Here is another extract from Carl Ewald's hitherto untranslated book, *My Big Girl*. This is the third of a series of extracts put into English from the original Danish by Beth Bolling, of Philadelphia. The first appeared in "Children" for Nov. 30, 1960; the second, Feb. 22. A number of MANAS readers seem to want as much of Ewald as they can get. Through courtesy of Mrs. Bolling and by permission of the author's son in Denmark, we shall be able to continue for some time with the first English printing of portions of *My Big Girl*.]

My big girl comes home from the seminary completely upset.

"Joanna Nielsen has had a baby."

"Oh, she has?"

"But Dad—It is an illegitimate child."

"Nonsense, my friend. Children are always legitimate. Parents can be abominably 'illegitimate'—children, never."

"But she is not married."

"One can't get babies unless one is married."

She sits with her hat still on and her book in her lap and looks from our mother to me. "It is our language which is nonsense," I say. "Certainly she is married when she has had a baby. That is for sure. And the child is as legitimate as any child in the world. What you mean is that neither City Hall nor the minister has sanctioned her marriage. Then you must say she is not 'wed'."

"Yes, but Dad, is one allowed to do that?,"

"I don't know who 'one' is," I say. "Nor do I know if Joanna got any permission. But tell me now what you know."

She tells us. Joanna had been sick for a long time. Nobody knew what it was. Nobody was permitted to see her. My big girl, herself, wanted to see Joanna last Friday, but they said that she had moved. Today Miss Petersen went to all the

classes and told them. They ought not to see her any more, not even greet her in the street.

"Miss Petersen is a Christian, I guess," I say apologetically.

My big girl cries her heart out. Our mother pats her wet cheeks and quiets her. "Oh, it must be terrible for Joanna," she says, "I was so fond of her—you remember—you said she looked so sweet when she was here last Christmas? And then she was so pretty!"

"Sure—things like that happen to the prettiest."

"Miss Petersen said it was a blemish on the whole seminary, and that Joanna was never to put her foot inside the door again. She had betrayed the good people who helped her, because they thought she was a decent girl. She was poor and had nothing of her own except her good name and reputation. Miss Petersen said, too, that it all happened because she had no father or mother. "

"Miss Petersen is lying," I say sharply. "It happened because she was with a man."

We sit there and hang our heads for a while. Then I phone for a cab.

"Get ready," I say. "What we are going to do is to go see Joanna."

When we finally arrive at the place where Joanna has hidden away herself and her illegal happiness, my big girl takes a firm hold of my arm as we walk down the long corridor with no names on the doors. I feel I can sense her heart beat. Joanna sits right next to the crib in which the baby is sleeping. She gets red in the face as my big girl throws her arms around her and kisses her again and again. But it is for joy. There is no shame in her eyes, no embarrassment in her manner.

"Congratulations, Mrs. Joanna," I say.

And she shakes my hand and kisses our mother, and the three women stick their heads together over the crib and look worshipfully at the eighth wonder of the world. Embarrassment,

however, is a fair description of the father of the wonder, as he emerges from a corner and suddenly stands amongst us. Apparently he is a young artist with quite a well known name. His sincere eyes look uneasily into mine as he shakes my outstretched hand.

"Well . . . this is . . . a bad situation," he says.

"Is it?" I say sympathetically. "I don't really know anything about it. But I guess it'll be all right."

He doesn't understand me, but Joanna does. She gives me a warm look. And so does my big girl who looks at the artist. Then she smiles and gives the bad person her hand with a look as if she is restoring his honor. He smiles and feels shy in the presence of this innocent girl—in a different way from what he expected. But their apartment is too small for all this. And the sun shines outside while the cab is waiting in the street.

We drive through the main street with the top down. My big girl sits with Joanna's hand in hers. She looks for people she knows on the sidewalk . . . if she could only meet a lot of the schoolmates, and especially Miss Petersen. Then she looks at Joanna, who has not been outdoors for a long time, and feels the impact of the sunlight and the crowd. She presses her hand warmly and grows inside in discrimination between the petty and the large.

"How fine and sincere youth is," I say to the young artist. "Shame on those who betray it." We eat a festive dinner at the shore. The young man clutches his wine glass: "Joanna, let's express our gratitude."

"We shall accept no gratitude," I say. "But let's drink. A toast for happiness—as it comes—and for those who catch it on the wing."

* * *

Aunt Anna arrives—with her biggest face on.

She sits down with her hat, umbrella and totebag, and makes lots of mystical signs in the

direction of my big girl, who is buried in her book after Aunt Anna's mouthy greeting.

However, I don't understand her signs, so she has to speak.

"I hear that this Joanna Nielsen is coming here regularly with her—seducer," she says.

"Almost every other day, Aunt Anna. And the baby, too. We are expecting them in another half hour."

"Well—I shall be gone by then. Ask your daughter to leave the room."

"Certainly not," I say. "She is Joanna's friend. It will be good for her to hear what you have to say."

"Well, I see. Of course, nowadays young girls are let in on everything."

"But—Aunt Anna," I say cheerfully.

"It is my opinion that the young lady heretofore mentioned has lost her good name and reputation."

"Yes, she has," I say. "But she has got something in return. The man she loves is a fine fellow. And the baby is perfectly wonderful. Ask our mother."

"Now, listen, my good neph—"

"Excuse me for interrupting," I say. "I know what you are about to say. But this business with her good name and reputation is a little different from what it was in the old days. Times are changing. It has become much more difficult for a decent girl nowadays to hang on to her good name and reputation.

"Certain *I* have done so, heaven be praised, until this very day, and shall do so for the rest of my life."

"Sure—but—where are your husband and your child, Aunt Anna?"

She gets up, white as a sheet. Our mother escorts her out and returns with a worried look.

“She is seriously angry,” she says. “You were too hard on her this time.”

“I *was* hard on her,” I say. “She is impoverished, and thus she is envious of those who have something. I just can’t stand that she calls it virtue.”

* * *

The young artist and I sit in the garden under the apple trees. My big girl lies in the grass with her head on my knee. Joanna and our mother push the baby carriage along the path and talk domestics.

“We are thinking about getting married now,” he says.

“You are?”

My big girl looks at him with happy eyes.

“Women are all like that,” I say. “Now look at this one. She has been thinking much more about this than you and Joanna put together. She is quite clear on the various aspects of it.”

“Yes, it isn’t so simple,” he says.

“No, it isn’t. Marriage is the most difficult thing of all in the world. But you and Joanna should have good prospects. You found each other in the green forest. You have had good times together as well as bad ones. You have a healthy and beautiful child.”

“Yes—it’s mostly for the sake of the child.”

“I don’t quite understand,” I say. “Certainly one marries only for one’s own sake. What could possibly happen to the child if you and Joanna had no wedding?”

“Well—when she grows up. One never knows how a young girl will get along without. . . .”

“Without a father? You mean she might fare the same way her mother did?”

“Yes.”

I laugh so heartily that I insult my guest.

“Miss Petersen,” I say, and give my big girl a nudge. “Please don’t get angry—but I couldn’t help thinking of the principal of the seminary—she told all the classes that Joanna’s plight was caused by the fact that she had neither father nor mother.”

“Yes, I know,” he says, red in the face. “But if this kind of thing happened to *your* daughter”

“What makes you think that I should be less decent and kind toward my own daughter than toward relative strangers?”

He finds no answer.

“It is odd that life should be no more compelling, my young friend,” I say. “Here you have begotten an ‘illegitimate’ child with the girl you love. You are happy about the girl and no less about the baby. But before the baby has cut her first tooth, you are wringing your hands at the thought that you might become a grandfather to someone in a like position.” I walk off down the path to the others.

FRONTIERS Ingersoll's Philosophy

WE have a letter from Eva Ingersoll Wakefield, granddaughter of Robert G. Ingersoll, concerning the recent *Frontiers* article which discussed Col. Ingersoll and Clarence Darrow. This article was developed around the request of a reader who asked for an exploration of "the possibilities of mature individuals without transcendental influences." Mrs. Wakefield writes:

MANAS: Your references in the March 22 *Frontiers* to the "maturity" of Ingersoll and Darrow are refreshingly perceptive up to a point. However, I cannot agree with your statement that "their labors for truth and against the evils which cause human suffering were an expression of a transcendental influence" in the lives of the two men. You rightly state that such an influence cannot be proved or disproved. It is also true that Ingersoll and Darrow had little use for metaphysical distinctions. Indeed, they both regarded metaphysics as an almost frivolous and entirely futile intellectual indulgence and luxury offering no appreciable rewards for the free, rational intelligence. Both Grandfather Ingersoll and Clarence Darrow conceived of metaphysics as belonging in the category of supernaturalism, and, being incurable naturalists, had no interest in it whatever.

Ingersoll, like all poets (and he was a poet), had the most delicate and sensitive intuitions and imaginative insights which were not, so far as he was aware, in conflict with his agnostic-secularist-materialist philosophy. Ingersoll and Darrow were materialists with "high spiritual concerns"—godless moralists consecrated to the ethical life.

Neither Ingersoll nor Darrow believed that "matter" and "spirit" could be wholly separated, believing that spirit evolved out of matter, to put it with crude brevity. Ingersoll was too mentally modest to be a dogmatist of any description; and he felt most deeply that the great ultimate questions of origin and destiny were beyond human competence and comprehension. I cannot speak for Darrow in this regard, although, calling himself an agnostic, he in all probability shared this point of view. Nevertheless, agnostic and atheist though he was, my Grandfather was passionately concerned with humanistic religion, with the "soul" and with true "spirituality." He said: "The spiritual man lives to his

ideal. He endeavors to make others happy. He does not despise the passions that have filled the world with art and glory. He loves his wife and children—home and fireside. He cultivates the amenities and refinements of life. He is the friend and champion of the oppressed. . . . He attacks what he believes to be wrong, though defended by the many, and he is willing to stand for the right against the world. He enjoys the beautiful. In the presence of the highest creations of Art his eyes are suffused with tears. When he listens to the great melodies, the divine harmonies, he feels the sorrows and the raptures of death and love. He is intensely human. He carries in his heart the burdens of the world. He searches for the deeper meanings. He appreciates the harmonies of conduct, the melody of a perfect life. . . .

"He loves his wife and children better than any god. He cares more for the world he lives in than for any other. . . .

"Spirituality is all of this world . . . It comes from no heaven, but it makes a heaven where it is . . . There is no possible connection between superstition and the spiritual, or between theology and the spiritual . . . Spirituality is the perfect health of the soul."

EVA INGERSOLL WAKEFIELD

New York City

As very nearly always, differences of opinion on questions of this sort involve semantic difficulties and matters of precise statement. For example, we did not assert that Ingersoll and Darrow reflected "transcendental influences" in their lives, but said that many people, among them Gandhi, would have said this about them. We did say that the qualities which both Darrow and Ingersoll possessed in abundance—fair-mindedness, love of justice, love of freedom, regard for human suffering, hatred of oppression and deception—might well be regarded as representative of "transcendental influence."

But why, after all, trouble to argue such points? Does it matter that great and distinguished men, such as Darrow and Ingersoll undoubtedly were, rejected metaphysical philosophies and would no doubt have denied anything like a transcendental influence in their lives? Must we, now that they are no longer

among us, attribute to them a quality of being which in life they would have abjured?

So far as those men personally are concerned, it matters not at all, and it would, in fact, be pompous and ungracious to press the question with insistence. As men of their time, they labored mightily in behalf of the fundamental human decencies. We shall wait long before finding their equals in the humanitarian spirit.

What we are interested in, here, and were interested in in the *Frontiers* article for March 22, is the central problem of the origin of these ennobling qualities. What Ingersoll and Darrow demonstrated in their lives, to the chagrin and shame of their bigoted antagonists, was that high human purposes may be held and indomitably pursued without acceptance of any orthodox religious beliefs—and, indeed, be accompanied by defiance of conventional beliefs. They showed that a man can be the full measure of a man without any sort of intellectual subservience to religious tradition. You could say that the intuitive—"instinctive" would probably have been a more acceptable adjective to Darrow, and probably to Ingersoll—recognition of the elements of a good life is all that a man needs to live that life, and that Darrow and Ingersoll proved it.

Our question is, but *why*?

Why did these men, as outspoken unbelievers, feel moved to live as they did, to give of themselves unstintingly as they did? They were unquestionably altruists in the full meaning of this term. They lived and worked for others. They were unselfish, in a world in which very few men are unselfish—few, at least, to the extent that Ingersoll and Darrow were.

You can say, of course, that the character of these men is a stubborn, brute fact, and that it has no explanation.

But you don't have to say that. You can also point out, as a general problem, the extraordinary differences among men, in what are called moral or ethical perceptions and behavior. If we are to

understand these differences, we ought not to set the problem aside as totally beyond our understanding. We need more men like Ingersoll and Darrow. Behavior is more important than doctrines. Love of one's fellows is more valuable than metaphysics. But this is not to say that metaphysics is of no use in trying to understand all these questions.

Mr. Ingersoll used the term "spiritual." If there is such a thing as "spirit," if it is the substance of vision, and the ground of great and tolerant hearts, and if it may be accorded the nature of impersonal reality, it is no theological imposture to suggest that it transcends the material limits of personal existence, yet is available, like the vistas seen from great heights, to all men whose fundamental interests lie beyond self-interest. We do not insist upon the word "transcendental"; on the other hand, we see no harm in it, and a usefulness in suggesting meanings which other terms do not imply