

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE

THERE is no use in trying to sum up the spirit of America in a phrase, for the destiny of the people of the United States is as mixed as it is unmanifest. While it may be said that from the days of the founding of the Republic, the potentialities of greatness have been present in the American people, only a blind nationalism would claim that anything like genuine greatness has been realized as yet. On the other hand, to minimize or to ignore the qualities of promise in the American past and present would be perhaps an even greater mistake. There will be advantage, therefore, in renewing acquaintance with some of the familiar elements of what is commonly called the "American tradition," in hope of gaining a closer touch with the actual currents of inspiration that have moved through American history. With reason enough, we suppose, most histories of the United States begin with a discussion of fifteenth-century Europe, endeavoring to convey some sense of the causes which led Columbus on his great voyage of discovery. But is this not an indulgence of the novelist's privilege to engage at the outset the sympathies of his readers for the leading characters of his tale? There may be less partisanship in the way that James Truslow Adams begins his *Epic of America*—with the dream of the Indians that a white god would some day return to their shores. It was of course the Aztecs of Mexico, and not the Indians of the Atlantic seaboard, who awaited the return of *Quetzalcoatl*, the God of peace and the teacher of the arts of civilization, and who mistook the Spanish conquerors for their revered and long-expected deity, yet a similar betrayal of faith took place on every part of the North American continent.

It is easy to understand the brutality of the Spanish *conquistadores*. They were after gold and converts, in that order. But the Pilgrim Fathers, and that other and larger group of

dissenters who settled along Massachusetts Bay, the Puritans—they were not after gold; as we are so often reminded, they sought freedom of religion. What sort of men were the Pilgrims, whose fame is chronicled in every schoolhouse in America, and whose simple virtues are made to stand as symbols of sturdy American righteousness and God-fearing piety?

It is true that the Pilgrims sought a home in the New World in order to pursue their religious beliefs in comparative freedom. They had suffered grievous persecutions in England and their stay in Holland was marked by extreme poverty and other trials endured for the sake of their faith. And to their credit, the Pilgrims were strict decentralists in matters of church authority, maintaining a principled separation between Church and State after establishing their settlement in New England. Plymouth was not a pastor-ridden community. As George Willison says in *Saints and Strangers*, a delectably impartial account of Pilgrim doings, "In the short-lived Pilgrim empire the 'voice of God' thundering from the pulpit never succeeded in drowning out the voice of the people speaking through their popularly elected representatives and civil magistrates." Mr. Willison also supplies a just appraisal of the famous Mayflower Covenant—that historic document of the democratic tradition devised by Elder William Brewster while the Pilgrims were still aboard the Mayflower, for the purpose of averting a mutinous revolt among the less privileged of the company. Of this social contract of early American history, the author of *Saints and Strangers* writes:

For generations, ever since John Quincy Adams rescued it from oblivion in 1802, the Mayflower Compact has been hailed as a great charter of freedom, which it was. It did not apply to all, to be sure, and its promise of "just & equall lawes" was often more honored in the breach than in the

observance. But for its day it was an extraordinary document, a remarkable statement of revolutionary new principles, an important milestone in our long, hard, and often bloody ascent from feudalism, from that degrading "aristocratic" system of power and privilege for the few which had held Europe in irons for centuries, vestiges of which still remain to plague us. It is also the fashion, as every school child knows, to hail the compact in the most extravagant terms as the very cornerstone of American democracy, which it most certainly was not. As the circumstances of its birth reveal, it was conceived as an instrument to maintain the status quo on the *Mayflower*, to show inferiors in general and servants in particular their place and keep them where they belonged—i.e. under the thumbs of their masters. As is evident from the merest glance at the history of Plymouth, the Pilgrim leaders did not believe in equalitarian democracy though they were moving in that direction. They favored a change in the hierarchical structure above them, but not below. That change in the foundations of society would come in due time, but long after the Pilgrims had gone to their rewards.

"American democracy was not born in the cabin of the *Mayflower*, or in the Boston town meeting," as has been well said by Mr. Samuel Eliot Morrison, son of Massachusetts and her most distinguished historian, "but on the farming, fighting frontier of all the colonies, New England included."

Mr. Willison's book deserves wide reading for its firsthand information regarding the Pilgrims. It comes as something of a surprise to learn that of all the passengers on the *Mayflower*, only about a third were true-blue Pilgrims, and that the rest were known as "strangers," to differentiate them from the "saints," as the Pilgrims modestly called themselves. Many of the strangers were pickups from the streets of London, gathered in at the last minute to swell the number of the colonists. Some were men of substance—Captain Miles Standish, for instance, who never joined the Pilgrim Church at all. So far as we recall, Mr. Longfellow does not mention this, nor refer, either, to the dissimulation and treachery by which Standish accomplished the death of a bold Indian whom he was jealous of and feared. This Indian, together with his brother, a boy of eighteen, and two more braves, Standish lured into a cabin with promises of a feast, whereupon Standish's men

locked the door and fell upon the Indians with swords. Of this encounter, Standish remarked ingenuously that it was "incredible how many wounds they received before they died, not making any fearful noise, but catching at their weapons and striving to the last." The only one not cut to pieces, the big brave's younger brother, the Captain "caused to have hanged."

The Pilgrims, on the whole, were an undistinguished lot, with one or two exceptions. The best of them, their pastor, John Robinson, never reached the New World at all, but remained in Holland, whence he addressed to his flock in America long letters of mild reproof for their bloodthirsty and unchristian conduct toward the Indians. "It is a thing," he wrote to the wayward saints of Plymouth, "more glorious in men's eyes than pleasing in God's, or conveniente for Christians, to be a terrour to poore barbarous people." The Pilgrims were indeed lacking in "that tenderness of ye life of man (made after God's image) which is meete. . . ."

Of the Pilgrims, let us say that they established for their American posterity the conception of independent thinking in religion, which was a worthy gift, but that the example they set in other respects was that of bigotry and intolerance, coupled with pious chicanery and the unlovely habit of defaming the character of all who opposed their projects and designs.

The idea that the culture of the United States had a distinctively religious origin is grossly misleading. Many motives led the colonists to come to the New World, and the religious motive was only one among them. Their origins are succinctly outlined by Arthur M. Schlesinger in an essay which appeared in the *American Historical Review* for January, 1942, under the title, "What then Is the American, this New Man?"—a phrase borrowed from an eighteenth-century American farmer. Prof. Schlesinger is concerned with the sort of transplantation of European culture which occurred in the settling of America:

The Old World heritage consisted merely of that part of European culture which the people who settled America had shared. The great bulk of the colonists, like the immigrants of later times, belonged to the poorer classes. Whether in England or on the Continent, they and their ancestors had been artisans, small tradesmen, farmers, day laborers—the firm foundation upon which rested the superstructure of European cultivation. Shut out from a life of wealth, leisure and aesthetic enjoyment, they had tended to regard the ways of their social superiors with misgiving, if not resentment, and, by the same token, they magnified the virtues of sobriety, diligence and thrift that characterized their own order. . . . other influences also affected the transplanted European man. One was the temperament of the settler, the fact that he was more adventurous, or more ambitious, or more rebellious against conditions at home than his fellows that stayed put. It is not necessary to believe with William Stoughton that "God sifted a whole Nation that he might send Choice Grain over into this Wilderness," but undoubtedly the act of quitting a familiar life for a strange and perilous one demanded uncommon qualities of hardihood, self-reliance and imagination. Once the ocean was crossed, sheer distance and the impact of novel experiences further weakened the bonds of custom, evoked unsuspected capacities and awakened the settler to possibilities of improvement which his forebears had never known.

There were, then, for the American colonists, both the will to start anew and the conditions which compelled a new beginning. If one were to seek for the qualities which dominated the new nation in the hour of its birth, he would probably fix upon the extraordinary self-confidence of the Americans and their practical capacities in many directions, accumulated from more than a century of experience in taming a wilderness and applying clear political thinking to the rude problems of the frontier. The only tradition which American leaders intentionally carried forward from European thought and which they infused with their own vigor and reshaped with their own original thinking was the great political tradition absorbed from the works of John Locke, Rousseau and Montesquieu—a tradition which may be summed up in the idea of the Natural Rights of Man. Here was the focus for American idealism; here, in elaborating this doctrine, was

exercised the genius of the Founding Fathers of the Republic. The Declaration of Independence is a declaration of the Rights of Man. The Constitution is an instrument for the regulated expression of the Rights of Man. The idealism of the founders of the United States was not a religious idealism at all, except as they saw that the idea of the Rights of Man is a metaphysical reading of the laws of nature, under which some deeply religious principle supplies the idea of human individuality, from which all natural rights gain their meaning and significance.

These great impersonal conceptions seemed to burst upon the horizon of the closing years of the eighteenth century with a flashing illumination of the minds of men. They gave philosophic dignity to the instinctive convictions of frontiersmen who knew their own worth as human beings, from what they were doing and had done. The first Americans were good at many things. They had to be.

Take [writes Prof. Schlesinger] the case of an undistinguished New Englander, John Marshall of Braintree, early in the eighteenth century. Besides tending his farm, he was a painter, brickmaker and carpenter, turned out as many as three hundred laths in a day, bought and sold hogs and served as a precinct constable. The primitive state of society fostered a similar omnicompetence in other walks of life, as the career of Benjamin Franklin so well exemplifies. Lord Cornbury, the governor of New York, characterized Francis Makemie as "a Preacher, a Doctor of Physick, a Merchant, an Attorney, or Counsellor at Law, and," he added for good measure, "which is worse of all, a Disturber of Governments."

In the field of "culture," the observations of Franklin, John Adams, Benjamin Rush, Jefferson and Washington reflected the sagacity of leaders who knew exactly what they were about. Adams, well acquainted with the situation of the artist in relation to the moneyed and aristocratic classes of Europe, and the prostitution of the arts to the service of despotism, sourly remarked, "The age of painting has not yet arrived in this country, and I hope it will not arrive very soon." Jefferson had no great respect for *belles lettres*. He wrote a

practical prose intentionally, and explained that in the Declaration of Independence the desire was "but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent." He continued:

Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind. . . . All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiment of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc. . . . I did not consider it any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before.

None of the Founding Fathers was anxious for an "imported" culture, with standards borrowed from the European class society. But all or nearly all of them were profoundly interested in the development of an educational system to establish upon a firm ground of learning the new principles of government which had been brought forth upon the American continent. Allen Hansen's *Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century* is a book well worth reading in this connection, for it digests the substance of the educational thinking of men like Rush, Noah Webster and others of the revolutionary period. Theirs was a living culture—culture that was not transmitted tradition but the vital thinking of men who were free from tradition, men with minds fertilized by principles which they were themselves transforming into a social system, day by day. One writer of the time, Richard Price, set the keynote for all future developments in American education.

Education [he wrote] ought to be an initiation into candour, rather than into any systems of faith; and . . . it should form the habit of cool and patient investigation, rather than an attachment to any opinions. . . . hitherto education has been on a contrary plan. It has been a *contraction*, not an *enlargement*. . . . Instead of . . . teaching to think freely . . . it hath qualified for thinking only in *one* track.

With such thoughts to represent them, the formulators of American idealism sometimes revealed a not inappropriate indifference to those who sneered at the young Republic on the grounds of its departure from and ignorance of European refinement and cultivation. When the Abbé Raynal, a visiting Frenchman, declared in print that not only had America failed to produce a single poet, mathematician or man of genius in any art or science, but also that, in his opinion, an actual physical degeneration of both humans and animals was proceeding on American soil, Franklin found opportunity, at a social gathering where Raynal was present, to invite the entire company to stand up, it soon being evident that the Americans were all above average stature, while the Frenchman was obviously undersized. The critical Abbé, as Franklin told Jefferson, was "a mere shrimp."

This was the Yankee spirit, little given to theorizing, shrewd, capable, endowed with a vision of the future of American civilization that was rather an instinct than an articulate expression, except in the case of the best men of the period. The early Americans were mostly farmers and artisans who refused to think of their lives in "cultural" terms—who fought the Revolution to the tune of Yankee Doodle, and whose sons and daughters years later spread across the great western prairies singing Oh Susanna. Beneath their multifarious practical pursuits was hidden something of the purposes declared by the Founders of their country. Even today, with all the accretions of the century that lies between that time and this, and with the blight of two great wars upon the land, there are still homespun spirits who arise to speak and write with simple enthusiasm of the great ideals of the American Republic. Charles A. Beard, in his *Republic*, possibly his noblest work, gave a mature and inspiring expression to the American dream. There was not, of course, only one American dream, but several, and none of them has been fittingly realized as yet. Beard showed that the unique contribution of the makers of the

American Republic was to create a form through which all worthy human dreams may be realized, and his work is important for the reason that unless that form is preserved, America may still have a glorious past, but no future worth talking about.

It is time, therefore, to reconsider the direction of the moral energies of the first great Americans, not by a parrot-like repetition of political slogans, but through a renewed investigation of the principles in which they believed and acted upon. The generations since their time have inherited what they built, but not their genius for construction. It may even be said that while they confronted a natural wilderness, and conquered and harnessed it, present-day Americans confront a wilderness of moral confusion, largely of their own making. Quite possibly the same principles, augmented by our own reflection, can be applied with as great success today.

Letter from **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—In the fall of last year London saw a succession of important conferences—an African meeting of chiefs and representatives, a gathering of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, and a Commonwealth parliamentary conference. All of these aroused great public interest. In a sense it was a domestic affair—in the words of Mr. Atlee, "a family gathering for understanding rather than for formal resolutions." An indication of the representative nature of the Commonwealth Parliamentary conference (at which the future of parliamentary government was discussed) may be seen in the fact that 490 million people out of the 550 millions in the Commonwealth are now fully self-governing, whereas in 1908 not more than ten per cent of the total population enjoyed that status.

The new States of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon were represented at the Prime Ministers' conference by their own Prime Ministers, and they had their own representatives at the Commonwealth parliamentary conference. In the words of the official communiqué after the final session of the Prime Ministers' conference, they "brought to the deliberations of their colleagues . . . the wisdom of their ancient civilizations vivified by the dynamism of the modern age." In a world which seems to be dominated for the moment by the industrial and armed resources of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., these meetings in London representing vast independent peoples were of deep significance.

One of the main Commonwealth problems under consideration was that of migration and the distribution of population. Without immigration, the populations of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, for example, are not likely to grow beyond 15, 9, and 2-1/2 millions, respectively. Yet they could support far larger numbers—Canada, 50 or 60 millions, Australia 20 or 30 millions, New Zealand 5 or 10 millions. Allied

with the needs of these Dominions, there is the argument that the British Isles cannot hope to support a population of 50 millions at their pre- or post-World War II standard of living, and that the only way out is to transfer 10 or 20 million Britons along with their industries to the places from which their food and raw materials now come. Britain's unique prosperity, attained by importing the bulk of its food and raw materials in exchange for manufactured goods and skilled services, is a thing of the past. The shade of Malthus hovers over our national economy.

Britain, also, has her population problem. The facts are indisputable, and have been recorded in a recent survey, *The Population of Britain*, by Eva M. Hubbuck. The average number of children per family is now two, compared with the Victorian average of five. With pre-war trends it is estimated that, by the year 2039, the population of England and Wales will have dropped from 42 to 14 millions. From 16 to 20 per cent of all pregnancies end in miscarriages, of which 40 per cent are deliberately induced, the British Medical Association estimate of abortions being about 60,000 a year. (It is believed that the population of the U.S.S.R. will reach 300 millions between 1970 and 2000). What are supposed to be the causes of population decline? To the usual economic reasons (the later marriage age of women, the education instead of the employment of children, the necessity to keep up with one's neighbours, the spread of birth control), Mrs. Hubbuck adds the decline of religious belief—"the proportion of people who feel at home in the world, assured of the purpose of life and of its ideals, is fewer than before."

It is interesting to see the growing admission of psychological factors into what was formerly considered to be purely a biological problem. There is emphasis on the intentions of parents. Are most babies unwanted? At the Peckham Health Centre in London, records were kept during 1943 of 62 babies conceived after their parents had joined the Centre. Of these

conceptions, 6 were actively resented, 26 were accidental, 30 were deliberate. At present, sociologists are divided broadly between those who view with equanimity a decline of population everywhere, as affording relief to dwindling natural resources, and those who are all for increase in numbers for various reasons, not the least of which is national or ideological defence.

But in all these discussions—most of them without relevance in the face of the grim possibilities of massacre by modern warfare—there is no hint of philosophical meaning or the importance of moral principles. The whole debate is governed by biological ends within the context of physical survival and welfare, even where psychological factors are advanced. The idea that survival, based upon the satisfaction of ever-increasing desires, may lead to ethical frustration, is as unfamiliar to the modern mind as the idea that there may be moral laws, as irrevocable in their nature as the laws of physics, which govern the *human* aspect of the evolutionary process.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

THE INEFFECTUAL GOOD

SOONER or later, a self-respecting review department must consider the work of Arnold Toynbee, the English historian whose *Study of History* has been much discussed in recent years. We shall not, however, attempt to tell our readers what Mr. Toynbee writes about or to describe at any length his conclusions. A number of comprehensive reviews have already appeared, and the one-volume abridgement of Toynbee's six-volume work, made by D. C. Somervell, is said to be excellent. Here, we shall take for granted Mr. Toynbee's capacity to generalize about historical events and to write about the past and the present as a thoughtful moralist should. Judging from what we have read, we doubt if the modern world can hope to find a juster and more sympathetic critic. One finds himself saying, "How very, very true," of many of the pages of Toynbee's volumes. Toynbee's judgment is the judgment of history, humanely but impartially stated. He seems a luminous ethical intelligence, although only in retrospect.

This brings us to the point. A man may have a profound ethical sense, as is the case with Mr. Toynbee, but if he gives no serious attention to metaphysics, he will be only a critic, not a creator. He can say what is evil, in specific terms, and present his evidence, but he cannot say what will produce the good, except by pointing to the virtues which are the opposites of the evils he lists. Toynbee's backward vision is brilliant, his forward-looking weak and ineffectual. There is no doubt about the fact that Western civilization has been and is without virtue. Mr. Toynbee says to the West, Get virtue or die; but he does not tell us how to get it, which is the same as admitting that he does not understand its origin—the origin, that is, of either good or evil, for the two cannot be separated.

The same sort of retrospective criticism occurs in the searching editorial judgments which

frequently appear in the *Christian Century*, and it seems also to appear in some degree in the works of Pitirim Sorokin. The *Century's* comment on the "earth satellite program" of the armed forces of the United States, cryptically mentioned in Secretary Forrestal's report (*Christian Century*, Jan. 19), is a good illustration. After describing the projected "satellite platform"—to be elevated above the gravitational pull of the earth by means known, presumably, to modern physics, from which, in case of war, destructive forces would be loosed upon the enemies of the United States—the *Century* says all the right things and asks the pertinent question: "Have we gone mad?"

Mr. Toynbee says the right things, too. Why, then, are his works not more potent?

This is a difficult question, and unless certain assumptions implied by our answer are admitted at least tentatively, the answer will have little meaning. First of all, it is not quite true to assert that Mr. Toynbee has no metaphysics. It is more accurate, we think, to say that he has a theological substitute for metaphysics. Take for example the concluding essay of his *Civilization on Trial* (Oxford University Press, 1948). It is called "The Meaning of History for the Soul"—certainly an important inquiry. In this essay Toynbee makes it clear that he accepts several doctrines of Christian orthodoxy. He speaks of the "primacy" of "each individual soul's relation to God." He takes more or less for granted "God's love" for the world. He seems to postulate the dual moral factors of "man's innate tendency to original sin" and man's "capacity for obtaining salvation in this world." The great objective, in Toynbee's terms, is "a cumulative increase in the means of [God's] Grace at man's disposal in this world," which would "make it possible for human souls, while still in this world, to come to know God better and come to love Him more nearly in His own way.

At the risk of sounding harsh and ungracious in judgment of Mr. Toynbee, it seems necessary to affirm that this account of the human situation, while dealing with ultimate values, is not

metaphysical but pseudo-metaphysical. It is pseudo-metaphysical because it ignores the contradictions hidden behind such dogmatic formularies as God's love of the world, God's relation to man, the Original Sin, and God's Grace as the means to Salvation. These conceptions are honored by time, but not by serious philosophy. All the old challenges of the agnostic to traditional Christian belief apply to Mr. Toynbee's position. He does not seem to be interested in the challenges of the agnostic. Instead, he leaves the reader to suppose that unbelief—for which the agnostics may be held responsible, along with Original Sin—has made the world what it is, and to hope that a return to belief will make it better. This, with all due respect to Mr. Toynbee, is exceedingly naive. The agnostic as a type, not to mention other less fortunate developments, is directly related to the irrationalisms of traditional belief, and Mr. Toynbee, as a student of history, should be the first to admit it.

It seems in order, at this point, in the brief space that remains, to propose some amendments to Mr. Toynbee's emasculated metaphysics. For God, read universal *Self*, thus abolishing the "relation" between God and man, or God and the World, and establishing an identity. For God's love, substitute the concept of universal polarity: in Physics, the forces of attraction and repulsion, in Ethics, the forces of both love and hate; in metaphysics, the reality of both unity and diversity. Add, for a principle of order, Emerson's law of Compensation, or universal justice. For Grace, read wisdom, and a growing sense of identity with other beings. For Salvation, read *solution* of the problem of good and evil.

These amendments create new problems, to be sure, but they free us from old difficulties which are stultifying to the creative spirit in man. We cannot afford to ignore and waste the mighty contributions of men like Voltaire, Paine, and Emerson, whatever the trials or moral emergencies of our time.

COMMENTARY

AMERICANS DON'T LOSE LOCOMOTIVES

ONE of the amusing passages in Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia* is the account of the Indonesian Republic's vain search for one of its locomotives. The locomotive just went off one day and never came back. Harassed officials looked everywhere, but they never found it. Mr. Taylor makes the event serve as a sample reason why efficient Americans get irritated with oriental ways. That was one thing, he said, which couldn't happen in America. And we, sympathizing, laughed with Mr. Taylor at the funny Indonesians and their unbelievable capacity to lose locomotives.

Then, a week or so ago, we came across an editorial in the *Christian Century* dealing with a report of the Hoover Commission for reorganizing the government of the United States. One of the subjects treated by the commission was the affairs of the military, whose wastefulness is notorious. According to the *Century* (Jan. 12):

The Hoover commission calls for a complete overhaul of fiscal policies and controls in this department. As an example of the need for such a shake-up, the commission notes that the army "is unable to state what had become" of 9,000 of the 25,000 tanks which were supposed to be on hand at the end of the war. Some 85,000 were produced and paid for during the conflict. Presumably 60,000 were destroyed or scrapped. Now the army has *lost* nearly 40 per cent of the remainder! Their cost to the taxpayer was over \$2,000,000,000. Were these vehicles ever made? Were they destroyed, lost, or just stolen? The army can't say. It is too busy drawing up requests for more money and more power to find out.

That's the Americans for you. They couldn't lose one locomotive, but 9,000 tanks is another matter. To lose track of 9,000 tanks is a project worthy of the military imagination.

There are other evidences in the Hoover Commission's report that the military is not lacking in imagination. It seems that last spring a mistaken intelligence report prepared by the armed forces "stimulated recommendations which, if followed, might well have had serious

consequences." These "serious consequences, apparently, could have meant war, had it not been for the corrective influence of the Central Intelligence Agency which made another evaluation of the "available information in good time." Later on, this war scare, not yet *publicly* exposed, helped to pass the draft law in June, and Hanson Baldwin, New York *Times* military expert, says (Dec. 2, 1948) that Congress passed its huge armaments program "on the heels of a war scare partially inspired in Washington where predictions were then being made that there would be 'war before the harvest'."

One press account of the synthetic war scare explained that intelligence reports had mistaken the normal movement of Soviet troops to spring stations for evidence that the Soviet Army was "on the move." It does not take much civilian imagination to recognize that another such erroneous report, made at the "right" time, could set off the first lightning strokes of an atomic war. Then we'd really see American efficiency in action.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

[We print below, with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, the second of three stories selected from the writings of the Danish author, Carl Ewald. A number of Ewald's stories about his "little boy" appeared in the *Woollcott Reader*. Perhaps there are other tales, as good or better, about children, and for ourselves; but if this is so, we have not been able to discover them.]

MY little boy is given a cent by Petrine with instructions to go to the baker's and buy some biscuits.

By that which fools call an accident, but which is really a divine miracle, if miracles there be, I overhear this instruction. Then I stand at my window and see him cross the street in his slow way and with bent head; only, he goes slower than usual and with his head bent more deeply between his small shoulders.

He stands long outside the baker's window, where there is a confused heap of lollipops and chocolates and sugar-sticks and other things created for a small boy's delight. Then he lifts his young hand, opens the door, disappears and presently returns with a great paper bag, eating with all his might.

And I, who, Heaven be praised, have myself been a thief in my time, run all over the house and give my orders.

My little boy enters the kitchen.

"Put the biscuits on the table," says Petrine.

He stands still for a moment and looks at her and at the table and at the floor. Then he goes silently to his mother.

"You're quite a big boy now, that you can buy biscuits for Petrine," says she, without looking up from her work.

His face is very long, but he says nothing. He comes quietly in to me and sits down on the edge of a chair.

"You have been over the way, at the baker's."

He comes up to me, where I am sitting and reading, and presses himself against me. I do not look at him, but I can perceive what is going on inside him.

"What did you buy at the baker's?"

"Lollipops."

"Well, I never! What fun! Why, you had lollipops this morning. Who gave you the money this time?"

"Petrine."

"Really! Well, Petrine is certainly very fond of you.

Do you remember the lovely ball she gave you on your birthday?"

"Father, Petrine told me to buy a cent's worth of biscuits."

"Oh, dear!"

It is very quiet in the room. My little boy cries bitterly and I look anxiously before me, stroking his hair the while.

"Now you have fooled Petrine badly. She wants those biscuits, of course, for her cooking. She thinks they're on the kitchen-table and, when she goes to look, she won't find any. Mother gave her a cent for biscuits.

Petrine gave you a cent for biscuits and you go and spend it on lollipops. What are we to do?"

He looks at me in despair, holds me tight, says a thousand things without speaking a word.

"If only we had a cent," I say. "Then you could rush over the way and fetch the biscuits."

"Father. . . ." His eyes open very wide and he speaks so softly that I can hardly hear him. "There is a cent on mother's writing-table."

"Is there?" I cry with delight. But, at the same moment, I shake my head and my face is overcast again. "That is no use to us, my little

boy. That cent belongs to mother. The other was Petrine's. People are so terribly fond of their money and get so angry when you take it from them. I can understand that, for you can buy such an awful lot of things with money. You can get biscuits and lollipops and clothes and toys and half the things in the world. And it is not so easy either to make money. Most people have to drudge all day long to earn as much as they want. So it is no wonder that they get angry when you take it. Especially when it is only for lollipops. Now Petrine . . . she has to spend the whole day cleaning rooms and cooking dinner and washing up before she gets her wages. And out of that she has to buy clothes and shoes . . . and you know that she has a little girl whom she has to pay for at Madam Olson's. She must certainly have saved very cleverly before she managed to buy you that ball."

We walk up and down the room, hand in hand. He keeps on falling over his legs, for he can't take his eyes from my face.

"Father . . . haven't you got a cent?"

I shake my head and give him my purse:

"Look for yourself," I say. "There's not a cent in it. I spent the last this morning."

We walk up and down. We sit down and get up and walk about again. We are very gloomy. We are bowed down with sorrow and look at each other in great perplexity.

"There might be one hidden away in a drawer somewhere," I say.

We fly to the drawers.

We pull out thirty drawers and rummage through them. We fling papers in disorder, higgledy-piggledy, on the floor: what do we care? If only, if only we find a cent. . . .

Hurrah!

We both, at last, grasp at a cent, as though we would fight for it . . . we have found a

beautiful, large cent. Our eyes gleam and we laugh through our tears.

"Hurry now," I whisper. "You can go this way . . . through my door. Then run back quickly up the kitchen stairs, with the biscuits, and put them on the table. I shall call Petrine, so that she doesn't see. And we won't tell anybody."

He is down the stairs before I have done speaking, I run after him and call to him:

"Wasn't it a splendid thing that we found that cent?" I say.

"Yes," he answers, earnestly.

And he laughs for happiness and I laugh too and his legs go like drumsticks across to the baker's.

From my window, I see him come back, at the same pace, with red cheeks and glad eyes. He has committed his first crime. He has understood it. And he has not the sting of remorse in his soul nor the black cockade of forgiveness in his cap.

The mother of my little boy and I sit until late at night talking about money, which seems to us the most difficult matter of all.

For our little boy must learn to know the power of money and the glamour of money and the joy of money. He must earn much money and spend much money. . . .

Yet there were two people, yesterday, who killed a man to rob him of four dollars and thirty-seven cents. . . .

FRONTIERS Co-ops and Taxes

QUESTIONING the enthusiasm of a recent MANAS article for cooperative enterprise, a subscriber writes:

I'm not anti the co-ops, nor have I studied the movement. . . . However, in the United States co-ops don't share government support by payment of taxes as the rest do. . . . Since neither co-ops nor government projects are taxed, it is understandable why the enterprises are considered similar—even socialistic. The distinction that co-ops, to survive, must theoretically be more efficient than private enterprise, while government enterprise need not, may be one debatable difference.

As the co-ops have lately been targets of aggressive attack—an attack spearheaded by the National Tax Equality Association, with the support of some thirty-seven state organizations—a fairly thorough discussion of this question seems in order.

What facts are involved? There is no space to explore the numerous misstatements made by enemies of the co-ops, although these are a kind of "fact" connected with the problem of why there is so much misinformation abroad concerning co-ops. Here, we can discuss only the actual tax situation and one or two related issues.

It is misleading, of course, to say that co-ops do not pay taxes. With the exception of a number of farmer co-ops which qualify as non-profit businesses under Section 101 of the Internal Revenue Code, cooperatives pay the same taxes that any other corporation pays under the law, and at the same rate. The exemption afforded to the farmer co-ops by Section 101 applies only to Federal income tax, and the same exemption is provided for numerous other types of businesses and organizations which are not operated for profit and which similarly conform to the conditions set forth by the Internal Revenue Code. Businesses which may qualify under this section include mutual insurance companies, mutual savings banks, mutual water and irrigation

companies, benevolent life insurance companies, and many others, including co-ops. Jerry Voorhis, executive secretary of the Cooperative League, told a Congressional Committee in November, 1947, that Section 101 of the code gives farmer co-ops "an opportunity to qualify for technical exemption from the Federal corporation income tax, when, as, and if they conduct their business in such a way that they could have virtually no taxable income, even if they weren't exempt. Only half of them attempt to so qualify, and their number is steadily declining." He then added:

The big fact about this question of taxation is this: there is (except for Section 101 [12])) not a line or a sentence in Federal tax law that provides any different treatment for cooperatives from that accorded other business. Cooperatives are taxed under the same statutes and *under the same judicial definitions of "income"* as apply to every other business. When opponents of cooperatives contend that cooperatives have a "tax advantage," they search in vain for any shred of evidence in the Internal Revenue Code. It isn't there.

The foregoing covers the contention that co-ops are specifically favored in existing tax law. The next matter of importance concerns the claim that the patronage dividend should be taxed as co-op income.

The patronage dividend is the amount returned to the customer-members of the co-op as savings resulting from the fact that the co-op is not operated for private profit. Patronage dividends are really price reductions, periodically distributed to the customer-members in amounts proportionate to the purchases of each member. On this point, Mr. Voorhis quotes *Fortune* as saying:

Any company may, if it so specifies in advance, rebate all or a part of its profits to its customers without paying a tax on the money thus rebated. It does not need to call itself a cooperative in order to gain tax exemption on its contractual obligations.

A Treasury Department report to the same Congressional Committee stated:

The exclusion of patronage dividends from corporate gross income is not the exclusive privilege of cooperative organizations. Any corporation making payments to its customers under the conditions prescribed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and the courts is granted the same treatment.

In other words, if private profit businesses wish to return to their customers the same proportion of their income that the co-ops return to their members, they are free to do so, and may thus enjoy the same freedom from taxation that co-ops enjoy when giving back to their customers the money that belongs to them.

On the tax status of a cooperative's reserve account, Mr. Voorhis has this to say:

If a non-exempt cooperative puts money into a reserve without first allocating such money among its patrons individually, it must pay corporate income taxes on it; for such money belongs to the cooperative, not to the members.

On sales to non-member patrons:

If a cooperative makes savings on business carried on with non-members and is not bound by prior agreement to pay patronage refunds to non-members on the same basis as to members—then the cooperative is making a profit, and it pays taxes on it as it should do.

In cases where patronage refunds are taken by members in the form of stock, instead of in cash, the shares issued are liabilities of the co-op, and therefore not taxable. All cooperatives, however, excepting only those which under Section 101 restrict their operations as nonprofit businesses, pay the usual Federal income tax on the interest paid to shareholders or stockholders.

There are probably further refinements which might be considered with respect to a comparison between co-ops and profit corporations. The major points, however, have been dealt with briefly, and there will be other occasions on which the issue may be discussed. It seems evident—to us, at least—that the present operations of cooperatives, under the law, are both equitable and socially useful, and that the usual criticisms of them are either uninformed or deliberately partisan.

The idea that co-ops are "socialistic" holds good in the sense that the members of the co-op own it and operate it for their common benefit. If this is socialistic, then socialism is probably a good thing. But "socialistic" as an epithet of condemnation is commonly intended to mean bureaucratic stupidity and waste, irresponsible government monopoly and centralized control. The co-op principle is precisely the opposite of all this. The co-op is the most effective defense against privately owned monopoly that democratic peoples have been able to evolve, but that defense is effective only under the free enterprise system. The planned monopolistic economies of either national socialist or communist states have no use for co-ops and quickly abolish them by decree or some less obvious smothering technique. The monopolistic interests of private enterprise would like to do the same thing.