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THE LANGUAGE OF AFFIRMATION

IT is a lot easier to describe the differences among men than it is to explain them, and while explanation is what we really need, description does help in understanding some of the results of human differences. There is, for example, the often self-imposed isolation of the intellectual. The moral neutrality of the vocabulary of scientific "objectivity" always seems to separate the analyzing and dissecting intellect from other men. Matters of the profoundest importance can be discussed in colorless scientific jargon without arousing the least interest in the average man—an "average man" who is by no means unintelligent, but simply one who remains unstirred by the "functional" language of scholarly analysis. The following passage, taken from a recent *Scientific Monthly*, may serve as illustration:

> It seems significant to this writer that workers in a number of academic disciplines have, in very recent years, expressed dissatisfaction with the traditional separation of facts and values. This dissatisfaction may doubtless be attributed to problems created by technological advances and to new scientific theories that cast doubt on older religious or metaphysical theories—from which traditional value systems largely originated—and to problems associated with the social science concept of "cultural relativism," according to which values are entirely a matter of cultural definition. In an age in which science and rationality are all-important, many people are unwilling to accept values simply on the basis of faith or precedent. The lack of any other accepted basis for value judgments may thus result in personal disorientation or social disorganization. This has been one of the major effects of an increasing use of the scientific method. Some scientists are now making efforts to arrive at a methodologically and socially more satisfactory approach to judgments of value. A detailed analysis of the contributions of sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and economists to this topic would reveal additional problems and approaches.

Here is a precise account of how the decay of religion, hastened by scientific skepticism, has left millions of people without any effective guide in their personal lives, yet our "average man," reading the foregoing, would hardly obtain the impact of this meaning from what is said. He misses in this passage—and we, with him—the feeling of essential conviction. What the average man looks for in a discussion of principles and faith for action is an inner movement of devotion and commitment. He knows, consciously or unconsciously, that nothing important can be accomplished without some sort of surging energy of belief, and he will not give his time to anything else.

One of the great scientists of all time, Charles Darwin, has said: "How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view, if it is to be of any service." Many of the writers on the questions raised in the paragraph quoted above seem to feel that they will lose their scientific standing if they betray an interest in any "view" or "position," professing instead to list the opinions which other men have expressed, and deploring, meanwhile, the confusion which results from a failure of the general population to be "scientific" in its attitude of mind toward religious or philosophical problems. In consequence, the average man refuses to take the scientific "ethicists" seriously. He is not interested in a learned debate about his "value system," if any, but would probably like to know what other intelligent men think about such questions as whether or not the universe is ruled by a personal God; if there is any hope of individual immortality; and if it is possible to convince oneself that nature is pervaded by moral as well as physical laws.

But intellectuality—superficially "objective" intellectuality, that is—maintains a horror of such questions. It awaits the "revelation" of new masses of "data." The rules of scientific method

seem to permit disdain toward the philosophical questions which men really want to have answered. Quite possibly, scientific method, as we have learned to use it, is incompetent to consider these questions, much less find the answers, but this does not make them any the less important. The fact is that all men take some sort of position on the questions of God, law, immortality, and all that the influence of academic neglect of these subjects has accomplished has been to create a small minority of echoing champions of "what science says," on the one hand, and a great indifference on the part of nearly all the rest. There are a few men, it is true, who have been able to profit by the spirit of scientific investigation, and whose personal philosophies have undergone refinement and development as a result, but such individuals are usually persons of exceptional caliber of mind who remain more or less unaffected by popular authorities.

The great majority of men, moreover, will not be particularly impressed by the fact that "Some scientists are now making efforts to arrive at a methodologically and socially more satisfactory approach to judgments of value." This is not the language of moral conviction. A Gandhi is able to impress the majority because his affirmations are direct; they spring from his heart as well as his mind, and he addressed himself to the tremendous issues of the modern world without fear of failing in objectivity. He was fearful, instead, of failing to tell the truth—at any rate, he made truth-telling his first principle, and this idea any man can understand.

In a way, the separation of learned discussions of modern philosophy—or of "values," which are the heart of philosophy—from the plane of common understanding is a part of the heritage of Western civilization. For more than a thousand years, the "average man" has been regarded as a "sinner" of defective mind and ambivalent motives whose chief aim in life ought to be to save his soul by accepting the faith that has been worked out by the Better Minds. This idea of human purpose—fostered with considerable hypocrisy, for kings, princes, and robber barons acquired much more land and wealth than Saving Grace—accomplished an unnatural division between the priestly and other classes of men, the priests being the ones who were supposed to understand Salvation, while the others did not. Today, while priestly power has waned greatly since the High Middle Ages, the habit of looking to experts for the final answers to the mysteries of life still shapes the attitudes of many millions, with the result that our "average man" often feels that philosophizing is "not his department." He may even make a virtue of this neglect of serious thinking, claiming that "professors" are ineffectual men who cannot understand or do any of the real work of the practical world. To the extent that he is right in this judgment—and he is often wrong—the academic world becomes a kind of citadel of well-bred security, developing its own special vocabulary, its petty vanities, and pretensions to "leading" the thinking of the civilized world.

To avoid giving the wrong impression, we should probably say, here, that we have no complaints against abstract thinking, as such, nor do we believe that any particular virtue attaches to the ignoring of intellectual formulations. What we are trying to suggest is that abstract thought and analysis are sterile when attempted without the inspiration of moral conviction, and it is this sterility which unnecessarily widens the gap between the intellectual and the average man. MANAS is itself devoted to the cause of conceptual thinking—by "conceptual thinking" we mean thinking which involves broad propositions of a general character concerning the nature of things—the foundations, that is, of a philosophy of life.

We are objecting to the peculiar combination of timidity and feeling of superiority which affects the mediocre academician when exposed to personal contacts with skilled mechanics who deal directly—and successfully—with the materials and

tools of the physical side of human existence; and we are objecting, also, to the suspicion and guarded wariness with which the mechanics and artisans confront nearly all intellectuals except those exceptional men who behave in the same way with every class of their fellow beings—who deal with them, that is, as men, and not according to their limited function and station in our society.

One of the explanations for the extraordinary popularity of the "Western story," these days, is, we think, a kind of instinctive longing for human relations which are on the basis of inherent worth or manliness. The typical Western story is admittedly made up of a series of clichés, strung together in a stereotyped pattern. But the most standard cliché of all in the Western story is the rejection of the social devices by which timid and weak men barricade themselves against personal encounters with courage and virility. In the Western, shrewd estimates of character replace polite "manners," and a man who comes from "back East" is continually "on trial" until he proves himself to the satisfaction of the "code of the West." The poor "tenderfoot" from Boston or New York quails before the straight-eyed, penetrating gaze of the plainsman or mountaineer who "sizes him up." While the older, Eastern society has built up innumerable little defenses against this sort of "nakedness," the West, according to the cliché, conducts its affairs in a way that tests a man's qualities almost immediately, and in public. Owen Wister's *The Virginian* is the classical example of prose along these lines, and is doubtless a strikingly original work which has been endlessly mined and imitated by lesser writers. In any event, it ought to be read for the psychological insights here suggested.

It might be noted, also, that a standard "surprise" plot in the Western is built around the idea of unsuspected manhood in the visitor from the East. The apparently foppish young college graduate turns out to have led the sophomore boxing team and wipes the bunkhouse floor, or the corral, with the overbearing foreman. Another familiar twist is the strong, sun-tanned wanderer who is continually coming up with quotations from Shakespeare, and reveals to the "amazed" sophisticates from the East that his scholarship is equal or superior to theirs. In addition, he is "a man's man." In the Western canon, such a man is practically "perfect."

Actually, he *is* practically perfect, according to any canon. That is, in the simply sketched literature of the Western story pattern, he symbolizes the realization of two basic human longings—the longing for courage and strength, and the longing for knowledge. He passes *all* the tests.

Admitted that the standard of bravery and manliness in the Western is so hackneyed as to lack any fresh stimulation; admitted, too, that a quoting knowledge of Shakespeare or Lord Tennyson has the most tenuous of connections with genuine learning. We are not here measuring the intrinsic merit of the pulp literature of Western adventure, but examining the deep psychological hunger which it satisfies, or attempts to satisfy. We might argue in fact we do argue that the typical Western story comes as close to "reality" as the great majority of "papers" written by social scientists and social psychologists on the subject of ethics and morals. The one class of reading matter touches the surface reflexes of the religious instinct of people who have never learned to deal with the problems of life in terms of general principles. The other class, the work of "intellectuals," satisfies the need of these writers to feel that they have done their part as the "leaders" or "thinkers" in their society, but what they write is as bloodless, at its own level, as the Western stories are lacking in genuine originality.

It is not easy to illustrate what might be regarded as "ideal" discussion of morals and philosophy, for the reason that the way in which libraries and bibliographers classify books has very little to do with the qualities we wish to emphasize. But the works of Plato, certainly, should be included—pre-eminently, the *Apology*,

the *Crito,* the *Meno,* and the *Phaedo,* and possibly the tenth book of the *Republic.* Then, to skip to modern times, Richard Byrd's *Alone* surely qualifies as an expression of lived religion which also provides a substratum of metaphysical thinking. And in among the horrors and the stark struggles of a man who is freeing himself from the obsession of alcoholism, in Harold Maine's *If a Man Be Mad,* will be found the record of basic convictions about the nature of things.

Convictions that are worth repeating have to be forged in the furnace of life. They may exhibit peace and serenity, but peace and serenity are always born of struggle. This, indeed, is an aspect of human existence which is almost entirely overlooked by socially minded and naturalist thinkers. The issues of life are better represented by dialogue and drama than by statistical surveys of human behavior. The average man feels this, even when he does not think about it, and in his choice of reading he gravitates to adventure, to thrilling trials and representations, however shopworn, of his secret ideals. A society which ignores the basic and entirely legitimate love of drama in human beings—except for exploiting that love through commercial publishing and commercial entertainment—is a society which systematically degrades the public taste, ignoring the testimony of untold ages of history. It offers its millions adventure, but with the mystical element in adventure starved out, perverted and finally destroyed. This, we think, is always the prologue to a Nazi *Götterdämmerung*—the climax which is reached when materialism turns itself inside out and affirms in terms of nationalism, blood and race what it denied for soul, mind and egoity.

Philosophy, it seems to us, must present drama which offers opportunity for identification with great ideals to its students and followers. Drama and adventure-telling, must likewise be contrapuntal—must present, that is, an underlying if mystically hidden theme. Nobility of action must imply an inner nobility of thought, and beneath the glittering treasure of the Nibelungen hoard must lie the Philosopher's Stone. Flights of the mind need the pulsing intentions of a living man to raise the vast body of our existence to higher levels of perception and action.

Letter from **JAPAN**

TOKYO.—Shintoism is making a solid comeback in postwar Japan, despite a series of successive blows which by all expectations should have consigned it to the junk pile together with a number of other pre-Surrender customs and beliefs. Utilized by the militarists to help their program of aggression, the war defeat blasted completely the Shinto claims of the "divinity" of the Japanese race. In the immediate days following the Surrender, the people openly jeered at the Shinto priests and their wartime prayers for a "Kamikaze" (divine wind) which would blow the nation's enemies to destruction just as the Mongol invaders in the thirteenth century were destroyed. But no "divine wind" came, and Japan was defeated, thus discrediting thoroughly the Shinto claims.

Then, in December, 1945, a SCAP directive deprived the Shinto shrines of the financial assistance they were receiving from the national treasury. The shrines, placed on their own at a time when they were being reviled by the people, were rendered penniless. On top of this blow came another which was the deadliest of all: the Emperor, in a New Year's message, renounced his divinity. And Shintoism had been founded upon the myth of an unbroken line of rulers from Amaterasu (the Sun goddess).

But Shintoism has survived these shocks, and today claims adherents totalling more than 42 million—more than half the Japanese population of 83 million. Too much confidence, of course, cannot be placed in this figure because the Japanese see no contradiction in their being Buddhist and Shintoist, or Christian and Shintoist, at one and the same time. In other words, it is explained that while Buddhism and Christianity are religions of a foreign origin to the Japanese, Shintoism is a belief in the nation and race which is inseparable from one's blood. Foreigners often express surprise that good Japanese Christians contribute to and pray before a Shinto shrine, but it is all perfectly clear to the Japanese.

Indeed, there is a real question of whether or not Shintoism can rightly be considered a religion. Shinto holds to no moral code; it worships no image; it believes in a life after death but has no concept of hell or heaven; it regards men as naturally virtuous. It does, however, afford a rite of purification which supposedly washes away the sins of the believers. It is marked by extreme simplicity and considers purity the highest virtue. The highest deity is the Sun goddess from whom the entire Japanese race was born; it is ancestor worship.

A matter of interest in this connection—in the realm of "believe it or not"—is the fact that the Education Ministry in a recent survey revealed that the followers of all religions in Japan total 96,000,000—13,000,000 more than the actual population. The explanation for this strange fact as mentioned above is that the Japanese find it not unnatural to believe in other religions besides their Shinto faith.

Although completely discredited at the end of the war, Shintoism has revived partly because of the very fact that it is bound so closely to the nation and the people themselves. But the revival of Shintoism in postwar Japan must also be attributed to the surprising energy of the Shinto priests. While they proved themselves opportunistic and spineless in the past by meekly obeying the biddings of the militarists—despite the fact Shintoism in itself is not militaristic—after the war Shinto priests took up the challenge which could have meant their demise and actively campaigned among the masses for a restoration of their broken fortunes.

Forming a central organization of all the Shinto shrines, the priests took advantage of the annual festivals to draw crowds to their respective shrines. They are organizing children's groups and establishing kindergartens—unprecedented steps for Shintoism. They are taking part in social welfare activities, dispensing charity among the less fortunate. They are taking their religion to the people, instead of sitting on their hands as in the past.

Their financial standing today is sound through generous contributions, the sale of "divine" tablets, the performance of special prayers and wedding services. The Emperor, while no longer "divine," has won the affection and love of the people—a closer tie than the former mist which hid him from the people. Finally, to a people whose confidence has been rudely shattered by the war defeat, it is a matter of solace to renew their faith in their nation and themselves.

JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
ANGRY UTOPIANS

READERS may recall our review, some months ago, of Nevil Shute's *Round the Bend,* in which the author took the reading public for a trial spin with his idea of a new, humanitarian religion founded by a half-British, half-Asiatic airplane mechanic. A lot of people probably liked *Round the Bend,* not so much for its qualities as a novel as for its brave dream of a transforming and quickly spreading religion for the masses. Because Shaklin's religion had no dogmas, and because it sought the actual practice of brotherhood, regardless of race or creed, we liked it, too, even though Mr. Shute's account of its sudden popularity was heavily weighted with optimism and without, it seems, full appreciation of the complexities involved in attempting to fill the empty hearts of the men and women of the twentieth century.

The High Place by Geoffrey Household (Little, Brown, 1950) is also set in a Near East locale, and starts out in much the same way as *Round the Bend.* A practical, heart-of-gold Englishman tells how he became involved in an anarchist plot to destroy Western civilization by helping to precipitate another world war—how, after going along for a while, his sense of the folly of war makes him betray his anarchist comrades, including the strangely beautiful woman who leads the anarchists—and how the dream of a warless world through the multiplication of little Tolstoyan communities fades into the frustrations of intrigue and ignominious violence.

This is a book about fanatics and visionaries and disappointed humanitarians. It lacks the free-wheeling fervor of *Round the Bend,* but sets off with greater realism the contrasts and conflicts of differing human types in their desire to make the modern world clean and good. Eric Amberson, tired of the impersonal stupidity of governmental bureaucracy, moves from England to the Syrian seaport of Tripoli. He falls in love with a Hungarian woman of aristocratic origin who, after escaping from both the Soviets and the Nazis, has with other refugee Europeans established an anarchist community in a nearby village. Amberson is drawn to both the woman and the community. He agrees to join with its members after learning that the leaders of the community are the secret brains behind the far-flung resistance organization known as World Opposition, committed to oppose the tyranny of the State, both East and West.

The mood of the leaders of this movement is reminiscent of the consecration of the oldtime Bolsheviki, nearly all of whom were purged during Stalin's rise to absolute power. A number of attractive nostalgias unite to fascinate Amberson. There is the idyllic life of the community, its peace and simple productiveness. There are the Old World diplomats, gracious in appearance and behavior, working for the disintegration of State power everywhere. There is this beautiful Hungarian who cannot rest, but is driven to endless activity on behalf of the ideal of a peaceful, tyranny-free world.

Yet slowly, Amberson begins to recognize that the movement has a neurotic core. The leaders are not really Tolstoyans, but Machiavellians. The peace they speak of is to come after "one more war." They work to weaken both sides, to confuse international diplomacy, and to create dissensions that will force another war. Then, after it is over, they plan to pick up the pieces and bring to birth an anarchist society of happy, industrious and non-acquisitive communes. Amberson betrays them. He engineers a palace revolution at the headquarters of the community, losing thereby his dream, his purposive activity, and the affection of the anarchist leader.

The plot of the tale is doubtless an old one, and hackneyed, but there is nothing hackneyed about the dialogue. During the hour of crisis, when the contending forces within the community have each its balance of power, and the conflict

remains to be resolved, Mr. Household makes the protagonist of each camp express his ideological or social-philosophical position. This brief scene sums up the radical and anarchist polemics of half a century. Appealing to the undecided members of the community, the woman speaks, explaining her position, which is that of the original program of the World Opposition leaders—to cause a war in order to bring confusion and disintegration to *all* the States of the present order, both capitalist and communist. When someone cries out "hypocrite" and "assassin," she replies:

> "Both! And liar! And any animal that it does you good to call me! . . . But for whose sake? For you, because here, where you live and work, is the hope of all humanity. What other policy can there be but ours? You are as futile as the fools who chatter democracy, the fools who pin their faith to the sacred majority, which year by year must vote more power to the State or die! Half of them will be dead in fifty years—does it matter so greatly if they die now? The majority whom I serve is greater still, and it is yet unborn. What have you to offer them? Nothing but talk like students in a café! . . . "

Thus the nihilist credo, which would remake the world by urging it on to self-destruction. The practical, conscientious anarchist—a man who confesses that he has no "total" philosophy—is asked why he does not answer the woman. He says:

> "Because there is no answer, and she knows it. . . . There is no way to freedom so certain as war. Good! I admit it! But I will not serve the unborn at such a price. And I have passed too much time in the chorus to be impressed by tragic queens. Look you, friends—I am an anarchist, but I am a European. And war is against my conscience."

Now the religious leader—a kind of creedless proletarian Gandhi—speaks. No form of political action, he says, can help human beings:

> "It is neither right nor wrong to obey government. . . .a man must follow his conscience if he believes his rulers are acting from fear or from the love of power. For the conscience of every spirit creates its own right, and there is no absolute right than can be known to us. It is not enough to cry out that a law is evil or a tax unjust. The law should be disobeyed and the tax unpaid. Nor is it shameful to be called a criminal. It is only shameful that there should be sufficient prisons to hold those who have followed their conscience. . . ."

A little later this man, the religious anarchist, adds a priceless bit of counsel, lending an authentic profundity to the entire volume. He says: "Among men who claim to serve their fellows, learn to distinguish those who love from those who wish to lead."

Mr. Household solves no problems. He simply arrays them, and lets the partisans, the fanatics and the visionary lovers of their fellows speak their lines. *The High Place* is only a novel, but it is one that represents a genuine stirring of the mind, and an honest questing for enduring answers. It is certainly a full justification for the writing of fiction of this sort.

COMMENTARY
AN EXCEPTIONAL SCIENTIST

IT seems only fair to report that since this week's lead article was put into type, we have come across a statement by an anthropologist which indicates that there are scientists—eminent ones—with an enduring interest in the sort of problem our lead discusses. The anthropologist is Dr. Clyde Kluckhohn, of Harvard University, and the statement appears in his Foreword to a rather remarkable book, *Masked Gods*, by Frank Waters, published by the University of New Mexico Press. (As the book is worthy of a separate review, we shall say little more about it, here.)

In recommending *Masked Gods*—a book which, from the "scientific viewpoint," seems to be rather "daring"—Dr. Kluckhohn says:

> Just how seriously the professional reader should take his technical objections to details and broad generalizations in this book is itself a provocative inquiry of a philosophic order. Professor Hartley Burr Alexander used to say that Plato was a wiser man than Aristotle because Plato realized the dynamic nature of events and therefore utilized the myth and other dramatic modes, whereas Aristotle looked upon experience as something almost static, something which could be described adequately by an architect's drawing. Mr. Waters approaches his materials at the mythic and symbolic levels. He is concerned primarily with the inner drama that lies beneath the surface of ethnological documentation. Perhaps he points to a deeper truth.

This is not a new theme for Dr. Kluckhohn. As long ago as July, 1939, in the monthly journal, *Philosophy of Science,* he was addressing his colleagues in anthropological science in similar fashion, warning against a too mechanical approach to the problems of human society. Writing on "The Place of Theory in Anthropological Studies," he said:

> We must be eternally on guard against the insidious crystallization of dogma (unrealized as such) at the expense of that freshness of outlook which is surely a prerequisite to real scientific discovery. As Bloomfield (and many others) have pointed out, "the Greeks had the gift of wondering at things that other people take for granted." . . . it seems to me . . . that the whole intellectual structure of western European thought has been to a very considerable extent only a parasitic efflorescence on the ideas of the Greeks.

What Dr. Kluckhohn is really concerned with in this article is the failure of anthropologists to devote themselves to synthesizing understanding in connection with their researches. He notes that out of 152 articles published in three anthropological journals over a period of four years, only fourteen were not exclusively "descriptive" in content. In another technical journal, only one article out of ninety-eight had theoretical content. Dr. Kluckhohn concludes that; in the view of anthropologists, "To suggest that something is theoretical is to suggest that it is slightly indecent." His own attitude is this:

> Science is on the quest of knowledge as well as of information, hence it is a form of intellectual cowardice to maintain or imply that we should stop with the accumulation of "facts" simply because their interpretation is fraught with difficulties and perils. . . . science must aim, at least, at theoretical principles which are more universal and which more nearly approach absolute validity.

In themselves, statements of this sort are enough to show that in science, as in everything else, the discovery of truth is owing to the imagination and *philosophic* temper of distinguished individuals. The "method" is no more than a tool, and it easily becomes the suppressor or prison of genuine originality. We are fortunate in having scientists like Dr. Kluckhohn to keep the record straight.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

WE always find it a happy occasion to be able to recommend reading material which may be inspiring to children. The Problems of education, if endlessly discussed, tend to become rather oppressive by sheer weight of numbers, and by way of the complexity which attends formulations of educational issues in this psychoanalytical age. But the substance out of which some of the finest moments and feelings of people's lives are built is extremely simple stuff. As we have suggested before, books carrying that feeling of "magic" we associate with the wonders of nature help to provide a general equipoise and appreciative sensitivity for the young.

How many parents, who now look back upon their early reading, discover that scenes and stories of nature, or "nature people"—like the Indians, living close to the earth and the forest—left the deepest imprint? A great many, we are quite sure, will remember that this is the case. But why? Why should the idea of Indians roaming naked through primeval forests, over soft and beautiful trails, implant itself so vividly in childhood memory?

Perhaps, as Gandhi suggested, the first step in education is for the young to learn to feel at home in the simplest and most primitive of surroundings—just as the intellectual best approaches a new study by obtaining a solid grounding in its fundamental principles. And what is, after all, more "fundamental" than a feeling of rapport with untouched nature? Not only has everything that men have done been built upon the ingenuity with which forces of nature have been utilized, but also, as everyone ought to know, the truly inventive geniuses have had a feeling for the materials with which they have worked. Luther Burbank *loved* his plants, and the good farmer has a feeling of communion with the earth, almost as if a portion of his personal identity were expanded and projected beyond the limitations of self.

In any case, we find a special satisfaction in recommending such books as Armstrong Sperry's *Call it Courage,* and *The Far Lands,* by James Norman Hall. Many youngsters have also found in *The Yearling* those qualities which make the fact of being intensely alive in the natural world a mystical and solemnly beautiful experience—like the best, or better than the best, in religion. Then there are other books which combine these factors with the first insights afforded to youth about human nature, Lincoln Steffens' *Boy on Horseback* being one example.

Since we have never before called attention to Herbert Best's *Young'un* in this connection, it must be time to do so. For this story of northern New York in its days of first frontier settlement can hardly be surpassed in terms of an author's feeling of understanding for the land he describes. Herbert Best lived, studied, and worked on the same land as that of his story of nearly two centuries ago, and was able to piece together, through research and observation, something of the spirit of those early days. As a good author should, he has used this background to highlight a tale of resourcefulness and courage. The plot involves three youngsters suddenly orphaned on a lonely farm. Their struggle is the struggle of Everyman against any kind of "wilderness." Adults will find in this story the same sort of inspiration that their children find. Unless they are crotchety, they will learn, from their own feeling of appreciation for the mighty, finally successful struggle against the clean odds of untamed nature, why such books are among the very best in the world for their children to read.

This family of children lives on the edge of a settlement, and, refusing charity through pride, gradually becomes enmeshed in the affairs and lives of the settlement. Finally the preacher marries the eldest girl. He needs her greatly, for her insights derive from richer experiences than the study of the gospels. The kindness in most men and women is seen to flow warmly and spontaneously. Each is a valued comrade to his

next-door neighbor, and each a necessary part of the other's day-to-day existence as they share their special abilities. The greediness and shiftiness which affect so much of our presently irresponsible city-living also works itself into and out of the story, but here the "evil" man does not need to be punished: he simply needs to be improved, and constructive citizens go about the task with conscientiousness.

Special light is thrown on the often unnecessarily confusing matters of love and physical affection. Here, without psychologists and even schools in which special instruction is provided, the youngsters felt and knew this part of their existence in terms of a responsibility which was integral with their attitudes toward all other subjects. The word "natural" can be done to death, but it still has a more potent connotation than any term we know for suggesting the most important criterion for evaluation of adolescents' problems. From this point of view, Hall's *The Far Lands* is especially good, and more than one parent feels that encouragement in reading such books will do much for the enlightenment of their children, providing them with more sensitivity to "fitness" of conduct than any ponderous discussion could supply.

How anyone can write on the subject of education and not at times identify himself with the "back to nature" advocates, we do not know. The experiences that are natural to the evolution of the human being are the truest and best teachers. Educators need be no more than suggestive interpreters in helping the orientation of the child's emotional nature.

So whether or not we know and like the Lake Champlain country, we can like this book, *Young'un,* and like it for its value to young people throughout the country. It was not written for the young, perhaps, but it is a gift to them nonetheless.

The current of nature-appreciation, by the way, should be one of the encouraging signs that our humanity is still alive. The prophets of gloom will have a difficult time persuading us that the trend towards automatic, mechanized living can overwhelm all persons. For instance, even the *Saturday Evening Post,* in an issue involving what we consider to be another nasty and irresponsible editorial denunciation of Nehru, India's Prime Minister, presents a beautiful story of bird migration and nesting, full of symbolic promise for man and wild creatures alike. This story—"Maqua the Pintail," (July 28), and also worth reading to our children—suggests that the editor who doesn't like Nehru might like him better, the more such stories he reads, for its mood carries a feeling of tenderness for the peaceful.

From reading such stories as these, we think, children may become aware that the wild things can teach us much in the way of courage, loyalty, and perseverance, representing, as they do, a balance and poise men must recreate, at a higher level, self-consciously.

FRONTIERS

The New-Old Education

IT was only a little more than fifty years ago that the revolution in the higher learning in the United States began. Led by the universities and colleges in the Mid-West—the region of grass-roots democracy, of determined "equality," and of eagerness for the practical skills needed to get ahead in the world—educators began to abandon the traditional pattern of liberal learning and to inaugurate programs to meet the needs of expanding agriculture and technology. The students wanted the sort of knowledge they could "put to work," and the schools set out to give it to them.

The study of the "classics," as pursued throughout most of the nineteenth century, was doubtless deadly dull. This course of study was originally designed to produce well-mannered and polished clergymen and it is easy to see why the son of a prosperous Wisconsin farmer would prefer engineering to Cicero, or would regard a course in animal husbandry as vastly superior to a stint with moral philosophy. In consequence, the requirements of what for many centuries was termed an education in the "liberal arts" underwent great changes over a period of some thirty-five or forty years. Finally, the complaints about "modern education" appeared in reverse, and employers began calling for a less specialized education and more general intelligence and actual literacy in the graduates of the nation's institutions of learning. The manufacturing chemist discovered that it was as important for a young man in his employ to be able to write a comprehensible report of his experiments as it was for him to be trained in the field of chemistry. It began to be recognized that the schools can never keep pace with the specialization of industry, and that what was needed, from even a "practical" point of view, was men with basic training in their field, plus a good, general background, instead of narrow specialists.

Meanwhile, men like Albert Jay Nock—although, to tell the truth, not many were like Mr. Nock—effectively mourned the passing of the peculiar virtues of the classical education. Then, in the thirty's, we began to hear from Robert M. Hutchins, the youthful President of the University of Chicago, who understood what Mr. Nock was talking about—and better, who understood what Plato and a number of other great thinkers were talking about. Dr. Hutchins was more than plaintive on the subject. He worked intensively to discover what might be the modern equivalent of a liberal education. Eventually, he succeeded in making the Great Books idea almost a byword in current discussions of education.

In any event, the pendulum is now swinging in the other direction. Quite possibly, the exaggerated emphasis on the "practical" aspect of learning was a necessary corrective to the caste-and-class background of higher learning throughout Christendom. We like to speak knowingly of the Greeks when we talk about education. We recall Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Peripatetic School, and other lore of instruction in the days of classical antiquity. But our "liberal education" was rather modelled on medieval institutions than upon the free interchange of ideas that was characteristic of Athenian pedagogy. Lynn White, President of Mills College, has put the matter briefly in his *Educating our Daughters:*

> Institutions and patterns of thought and feeling can no more escape their past than individuals. Our American colleges and universities are lineally descended from the universities of the later Middle Ages: they have always been, and today remain, essentially guilds *(universitates)* of clerks. Many of their peculiarities, both superficial and fundamental, can be understood only in terms of their historical origins. When professors dress up for parade they put on black clerical cassocks, monastic hoods and a headgear which can be demonstrated to be a priest's beretta rather than a hat: one wears it in church, removing it only during prayer. Until recently our diplomas were in Latin, and the degrees granted were still medieval. To be sure, in the United States we got a bit mixed up in this matter. During the Middle Ages, since the u*niversitas* was a guild, it gave a journeyman's—or bachelor's—degree, and a master s, sometimes called the doctorate because it entitled one to teach *(docere).* The former term became habitual in Britain, and the latter on the Continent. Since this country was subjected to two waves of educational colonization, one from England and the other from Germany, we decided to out-medievalize the Middle

> Ages and ended by granting three degrees instead of two: the bachelor's, the master's, and the doctor's. No one has yet really decided what our American master's degree means. The main point is that we have tended to compound our educational tradition rather than to rethink it.

And, it might be added, when this happens, change invariably takes place through revolt and rejection instead of through self-conscious growth and development. That is why, perhaps, we have treated our sons and daughters to a sudden and undiscriminating descent to the "practical" in education, leading to the disquieting discovery that in the passage of a few short decades, the "practical" has often become the superficial and trivial.

It is natural, therefore, to look backward while we are looking forward, in order to see where we got off the track. This brings us to an interesting bit of news concerning the State University of California. The Santa Barbara College of the University of California has recently announced the inauguration of a Tutorial Program, which has for its purpose "to give interested students a liberal education without the limitations of the traditional major in a particular subject." The tutorial curriculum is not simply "another course" added to the typical college education, but a serious venture in the direction of the kind of teaching which may be both intensive and inspiring. It extends over the last two years of undergraduate study, with preparatory work provided during the sophomore year. According to a description of the program:

> In the tutorial courses, of which he takes two each semester of his last two years, the student will pursue individual interests by reading and writing independently, and meeting once a week with a tutor to discuss his work. The tutors will be regular faculty members, and each tutor will have only three tutorial students in order to insure highly individualized instruction and close contact with the faculty. In this respect the program is patterned after the successful methods employed in the English universities at Oxford and Cambridge.

This program is conceived as a specific antidote to the mechanical, "clerkish" memorization of details which bores or discourages some of the potentially best students. As a teacher personally concerned with the work of the program has said:

> Serious students often enter college with intelligent interests which are not confined to a particular field. Others find after a year or two in college that pursuit of a specialized course of study prevents them from becoming acquainted with many of the varied areas of interest which life and the college are opening to them. It is primarily for these students that the tutorial program is designed, for by its flexibility and individual instruction it allows the student to broaden both his interests and abilities in a way in which the conventional course of study cannot.

It is of interest that high marks are not necessarily a prerequisite to enrollment in the tutorial program. This is in recognition of the fact that "the student who makes something of his education does not always obtain the best grades." Certainly, the intimate "meeting of minds" which the tutorial system permits and fosters is a form of educational experience which has long been lacking in the larger schools, particularly in the state universities. In this connection, it may be noted that the tutorial program now offered at Santa Barbara College is the first of its kind to become available at a state university.

Of further interest to readers may be the fact that this pioneering step is served, in the capacity of chairman of the tutorial program committee, by the teacher who last year wrote so informingly (MANAS, June 7, 1950) in opposition to the "loyalty oath" requirement imposed upon the State University professors by the California Board of Regents. Also associated in this endeavor is a professor who has been particularly active in furthering the study of the "Great Books" in Santa Barbara. These coincidences are suggestive and encouraging for those who see intelligent advance in education flowing from all these determinations.