VOLUME II, NO. 41
OCTOBER 12, 1949

OUR LOST INNOCENCE

WHETHER it comes from secret dreams of lost nirvanas, or from more mundane longings for an uncomplicated and tax-free existence, such as books tell us our ancestors enjoyed, there can be no doubt about the fascination of the simple life for the present generation. The world of tomorrow will surely be a decentralized paradise inhabited by rural gentry and their wives and children, their cows and their chickens, if wishes have anything to do with making the future. Not that there is much common sense about these longings, or practical estimates of the difficulties involved. There is not even a feeling that such hopes are actually possible of realization, except for the few, but no particular connection is necessary between what men dream about and what they think is possible for them to attain.

This popular utopianism has not by any means achieved uniformity of conception, nor, as a matter of fact, is it likely to be admitted by some of the fantasy-makers. It functions rather as a symbol for hungers that are seldom concretely understood—something that must be protected from practical tests, lest it be destroyed in confronting unpleasant reality. But there are many tangible evidences of the reality of the dream. How large, for example, is the emotional abyss that is filled by the formula Western story—and the Western film? What accounts for the hypnotic appeal of a form of entertainment which, in order to be successful, must avoid originality as carefully as an argument on religion? It is hardly the plot, nor is it entirely the "adventure" aspect of the typical Western, although that certainly plays a part.

Is it possible that "the Western" represents, for the people of the United States, a momentary recapture of their lost innocence—an opportunity to live once more, vicariously, according to a simple code, the rule that what a man is counts for more than what he has ? Every Western spells this out with a simplicity that is incapable of being misunderstood. And that is what we want, isn't it? We want our sterling qualities, our capacity for hard work, our loyalties and our braveries to be recognized. In the Old West, the Western-Story West, things weren't all mixed up, the way they are today. Men met eye-to-eye. They didn't hide behind fine clothes and Eastern manners—or if they did, they didn't last, . . . out West. When you can walk down a street in Los Angeles and be sure of meeting, sooner or later, at least one and maybe several boys between fourteen and eighteen who are wearing high-heeled cowboy boots—boys who have never been nearer to a horse than the first row in the balcony—it seems quite certain that the Western is a firmly established utopian myth.

Grown-ups are less obvious about their dreams. But if you go about looking for them, it is possible to find a stack of government bulletins from the Department of Agriculture in at least two or three homes of your acquaintances. There may be someone who has bought a little truck he doesn't really need—he's hoping to have "a little ranch" some day, and the truck will come in handy . . . won't it? *Five Acres and Independence* is not just a paper-covered Pocket Book that sells for a quarter in the drug stores: it is the secret dream of the Walter Mitty in nearly every one of us.

People want to get away. They are like the GI's the *New Yorker* described some years back, under the heading, "The Great American Fish Fry." A few score of soldiers were interviewed about what they were going to do after the war, and almost to a man they were going up in the hills, the *back* country, and fish—fish for pretty nearly forever.

Novelists, too, have their secret dreams, some

of them not so secret. Many of the successful ones, like Louis Bromfield, have got themselves farms. They hole up somewhere and try to make believe they've got their innocence back, too; and maybe some of them have, in a manner of speaking. But we like better another sort of dream, so far as novelists are concerned. Their symbols can be subtler, more penetrating in implication. E. M. Forster, the English novelist, for one, pervades his tales with a pleasant nostalgia for pagan supernaturalism. The suburbs of London are also the suburbs of Mount Olympus, in his tales. Forster's is a gentle but firm rejection of Modern Progress. His best people are always getting away from conventional bondages and keeping trysts with the pagan gods. Forster's characters seem able to find a faun or even Pan himself by crawling under a hedge in England, or walking through a leafy gorge in Italy. And this hint of access to the Other World, we think, has much to do with the great popularity of Forster's stories. There is always the possibility that he will give away his secret and tell the reader how to "get away," too. Forster nourishes the yearning for transcendental emigration. As between our present existence and being touched in the head by the Great God Pan, Forster will always choose to be touched, and his readers with him—at least, while they are reading him.

Last month two enterprising psychologists of the University of California asked several hundred persons the simple question, "Who are you?" The answers were not inspiring. Young girls placed emphasis on their social status, saying, "I'm a police captain's daughter," or, "I belong to the best club in high school." A little less than a fifth simply gave their names, another fifth gave their occupations, as "riveter," or "divinity student." A similar group thought that saying, "I'm a man," or "I'm a woman," met the question adequately. The older people have probably filled out too many questionnaires to have any serious idea about who they really are, and the youngsters want to be recognized for what they hope other people think about them. Nobody, apparently, thought of saying, "I'm a human being," or what would have been still more to the point, "I don't know; do you?"

Mr. Forster would rather live among fauns, dryads and pixies, and pay homage to the Great God Pan, than among riveters and divinity students and the rest of the unhappy, literal-minded world that believes so thoroughly in the labels people give to one another. And actually, it is much more heartening to be assured by Mr. Forster that his Other World really exists than to try to believe in the comforts about the future which this world affords. We have before us a Comptometer advertisement designed to convince the fearful operators of calculating machines that, whatever the progress Science makes toward perfecting mechanical bookkeeping and computing devices, there'll always be a little job for a little man behind those great big wonderful machines. The Comptometer Company gets downright democratic and talks straight to the boys and girls—to offset, we suppose, the unpleasant predictions of Dr. Norbert Wiener, inventor of a super-calculator that does everything but wind the clock and put out the cat. Dr. Wiener has warned that eventually humans won't be needed to run the nation's factories—machines like his, only better, will manage all the routine operations. But, the Comptometer people say:

> Science now admits that old-fashioned grey matter beats any new-fangled machine. Clever as these mechanical wizards come—they have only the I.Q. of a *worm*. . . . The *real* whizz, though, sits right behind them—big and bright as life—running the show. Who else, of course, but the Comptometer operator ? We've yet to see the equal of that keen head and those trained hands, for teaching a smart machine the answers !

Handy thing, human beings, to have around. So long as their heads are keen and their hands are trained, they can be used for running comptometers, and maybe something else. Who knows what uses for mankind Science will develop: anything is possible.

There's a kind of simplicity, too, about

running a calculator, or any kind of a gadget. They send you to a school and even get you a job at $0.925 cents an hour. If you come to work on time and don't whistle while you work you will probably have a job until the next Depression. Nobody can help a Depression, it's part of the System. Meanwhile Mr. Roosevelt—no, Mr. Truman—is working on the problem. Our worst enemy is Fear, so let's get busy punching the keys.

But people less psychologically attached to the System are buying lots in the country; they're even homesteading the Great American Desert. They won't be able to make a living, out there, but they can kick the sand around and call it their own. More and more people are beginning to hate the system with a deep and abiding hate. They want to get back—or forward—to a life in which the Comptometer people can't play God to them. They want to hear the winds rustle in the pines—they've read about that rustle for twenty years. They're beginning to feel about their jobs the way miners felt about going down into the mines in the nineteenth century. Not that it's dirty; it's just deadly. Even a worm will turn, and human beings, according to the Comptometer Company, have a higher I.Q. than worms.

Maybe there won't be any obvious counter-revolution against Industrialism. Most small farms need a job in a city to keep them going, these days, but the slow accumulations of pressure in people who are getting sick of their lives will go on until something happens. War in, war out, they're hoping, dreaming, planning, waiting for some kind of a "break." And the system isn't getting any better. Now that the Russians have an atom bomb, the system may turn out to be no good at all.

It is well, in a situation like this, to have some kind of a theory. Ours is that the dreams that are growing all around have roots in some deep spiritual instinct of the human race. The dreams are more than escapist fantasy, more than the forms taken by frustration in a world that seems to be closing in on people. These longings may even be the closest thing to actual reality that we have come to, so far, and the most important thing in life may be to try, somehow, to work them out.

According to this theory, the first decision involves recognition that neither the Comptometer Company nor Mr. Truman—not even God—can help us to regain our lost innocence. We have to do it for ourselves. This is probably the crucial decision, for all the others have to wait until after it is made. Next, we shall have to reinterpret to ourselves all the symbols we have been using to represent what we want out of life. Maybe it is two acres and a goat, and maybe not. Maybe it is just that we want to have command of our own lives, think our own thoughts, and in general get closer to some basic rhythm of existence which we feel is a part of Nature and which ought to be part of ourselves.

Different people have different dreams, and one man's way to freedom will not help another. That is why we have to find the way ourselves. Until recently, in America, most of us have thought that a college education would open all doors. But today, when it comes to finding out about ourselves and what we really want or need, we discover that a higher education is made up mostly of the isolated study of different departments of confusion. The dream of freedom has to do with the human heart, and there aren't any courses in this subject.

All this is a way of suggesting that in order to recover our lost innocence, we have first to recover ourselves—to take back all those portions of our being that we have given as "security" to the Church, the State, our Business or our Job. We may, after we have become ourselves again, give them away once more, but if we do, it will be to other human beings, and not to give support to and strengthen a system which, having won so much control over our lives, has now begun to destroy our humanity.

Letter from **GERMANY**

BERLIN.—In the evening, when you listen to the Berlin station RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) at about 10:00 P.M., you hear the whistling and whimpering sound of a screech owl which opens a broadcast of about fifteen minutes. During those minutes are read aloud the names of persons in the Russian zone who are secret informers for the Russian authorities. When you hear the owl, you shudder and feel the political tension physically.

Last year, this correspondent wrote that the Russian organism is too weak to "fester out" the "splinter" of Berlin. Today, not only is RIAS embarrassing the Russians, but people from the Soviet occupation zone are taking refuge in the Western sectors of Berlin. Spies are probably going in both directions, and the newest annoyance for the Russians is that Berlin has become the big display window of the "West." After the lifting of the blockade and the ending of the railroad strike which ended, by the way, with a compromise unfavorable to the courageous railroad workers, who are now defenseless against the Russian-controlled railroad administration—the huge inflow of goods into Berlin began. Towers of chocolate are piled up in the shop windows. Street vendors are selling the first bunches of bananas since 1936—which many children do not know how to eat, because they have never seen them before in their lives. Smoked fish has become a daily dish for many families. In short, "real peace" reigns on the open markets and in the stores.

But this applies only to the Western sectors of Berlin—to two million people. While those two millions—if they have the buying power (there are about 226,000 unemployed West Berliners right now)—can consider the "Big Window" not only as a place to look at, but a place to buy what they like, the other millions of the Eastern sector and the Eastern zone who are pouring into Berlin and crowd in the streets of the Western sectors can only *see* how the "West" lives. The exchange rate between Western and Eastern currency is so unfavorable for the Eastern side (I:6) that not many people of the "East" have enough money to buy a pair of shoes (in Eastern currency six times 45 German marks**)**. Thus, we have now a place of great opulence in the midst of the general poverty of the Eastern zone, where people still live mostly on bread and potatoes.

For this is the real meaning of the new abundance in West Berlin: that intentionally there has been created a high peak in the standard of living in the midst of the Russian-controlled sphere, to be seen and felt by everybody, and so to undermine Russian rule. Today Berlin sends not only her RIAS broadcasts far into the Balkan countries, but other allurements as well. The new weapons of the cold war are bananas, chocolate, smoked salmon—and the whistling of a screech owl.

The human aspects of the new development are not so bad: the steady pressure against the artificially prolonged want of Eastern inhabitants—prolonged in the interest of Russian armaments—helps to improve their situation. The "Big Window" shows to all plain people that an unemployed worker in West Berlin, relying on public support, still may obtain a greater range of better goods than a hard working "Hennecke-Aktivist" (Eastern German version of Stakhanov type). German authorities in the Russian zone are obliged reluctantly to try to imitate conditions of life in the Western sector. And while this goal cannot be reached they are forced by the new stage of the cold war to retain for the German population commodities which were originally destined for consumption by the Russian occupation authorities.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
SYMPTOMS OF A CHANGE

ONE gets the impression, these days, of a reviving interest in the "conservative" outlook on life. Historians are discovering hidden virtues in the lives and philosophies of men like Prince Metternich and Alexander Hamilton. Albert Guerard, writing in the *Nation*, records the view that "eruptions, earthquakes, floods, tidal waves, wars, and revolutions are deplorable and, in the long run, unimportant." Alexander Werth, writing from Paris for the *New Statesman and Nation*, reports the decline of the "Third Force" in French politics and the waning of hope that a "happy blend of socialist planning, social justice and political freedom" will bring into focus the liberal opposition to both Eastern Communism and Western Capitalism. Throughout Europe, government is in the hands of old men. Stalin will soon be seventy; Huess, the newly elected president of the German Republic, is sixty-five, and Chancellor Adenauer is seventy-three. Mr. Atlee is sixty-six and Schuman in France is sixty-three. In the United States, while Mr. Truman at sixty-five has a Cabinet of men half of whom are in their forties, Congressional leaders, both Democratic and Republican, are nearly all in their seventies? and some are over eighty. The present composition of the government of the United States, by ages, is in striking contrast to the youthfulness of the men who signed the Constitution in 1787—some in their twenties, the great majority in their thirties. Today, the younger men in government are almost all in the Orient. Mao Tse-tung, China's Communist leader, is fifty-six, Nehru, in India, not yet sixty, and Mohammed Hatta leads Indonesia's fight for independence at forty-seven.

But the Western world is not only old; it is also very tired. People would like a rest from war and fear of war, and they are hardly in a mood to respond to revolutionary slogans. It is natural, perhaps, that writers should concern themselves with a new assessment of "conservative" values and, where they once saw the hand of reactionary interests holding back the forces of progress, now discern the beneficent influence of "stability."

The chief weakness of this trend, it seems to us, is not that it may discourage or engulf manifestations of the libertarian spirit, but in fact that it is largely an emotional reaction. Just as most of the radicalism of the nineteen-thirties resulted from a superficial ideological "conversion" to the fad of Leftism, so the present longing for stability grows from irrational fears and insistence upon security. This results in a vast confusion of judgments about both the past and the present. If this department were given to prayer, it would suggest to whatever minor deities preside over political deliberation that special encouragement be provided to those men who are capable of divorcing ideological feelings from their estimates of statesmen and national policies, in the hope that some clear thinking about the great conservatives and radicals of history might emerge.

Prince Metternich, for example, has for a generation or more been regarded as the arch-conservative of European history. His labors at the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) have been held responsible for the reign of reaction which brought on the revolutions of 1848. His system, as Guerard puts it, was: "Combat every change. Do not think. Obey the emperor and the church." Metternich, then, was a reactionary—at any rate, he represented reactionary sovereigns and gave his life to propping up what he himself called their "mouldering edifice." Yet look at the Treaty of Paris, the foundations of which were laid by the Congress of Vienna.

This Treaty, it will be remembered, undid the conquests of Napoleon, which had extended over almost the entire European continent, from Italy to Northern Germany. Napoleon's empire was more solidly established than Hitler's brief rule of Europe, and the humiliation of subject nations certainly as great. As Nitti observed in his *Decadence of Europe*, in 1923:

> Napoleon had insulted all the princes, broken down nearly all the dynasties, and stained almost the whole of Europe with blood, in pursuance of his dream of fashioning an empire greater than that which had been the object of Caesar or Charlemagne. All France was with him in an ecstasy of grandeur and dominion. If a few of the old republican spirits had, without showing it to any great extent, tried to resist, the whole people followed Napoleon with a delirious enthusiasm.

But despite these extreme provocations, no attempt to dismember France was made at the Congress of Vienna. The French colonies were returned. The Preamble to the Treaty declared the intent of bringing France back to the relationships of trust and good will which had for so long been disturbed. The indemnity imposed upon France was so small that she was able to pay it all within two years. The armies of occupation had left French soil by 1817. The victorious nations neither deprived France of her fleet nor demanded any disarmament. As Nitti remarks, "There is no trace of hatred in the treaties, but merely a desire to annul Napoleon's work." Lord Castlereagh, explaining the object of the treaties in the House of Commons, had said:

> The only question is to decide whether a civilizing moral principle shall govern the world, or whether it is to be ruled by military despotism. The Allies have not even thought of reducing France territorially. That would only create a spirit of revenge.

Nitti, himself a leading Italian statesman of the epoch of the first World War, found great moral differences between the peace devised by the "reactionaries" of 1815 and the terms of the Versailles Treaty a century later. He wrote:

> In comparing the treaties of 1814-15 with those of 1919-20, or the Congress of Vienna of 1814 with the Paris Conference of 1919, or the Treaty of Paris with the Treaty of Versailles, one is overcome with sadness. The men whom we have been accustomed to regard as the mouthpieces of the past, the sovereigns by divine right, the ministers of absolutism, the diplomatists of the old school and the old spirit, such as Metternich, reveal themselves to us as men encircled with moral nobility and political grandeur, compared with those who, a century later, declared, in the name of the Entente, that they represented democracy and civilization. What a difference there was in their sentiments! There was then no hatred toward the vanquished, from whom all the acts of violence and injustice had come, no unbridled greed; but a firm desire to restore peace with justice, an almost anxious solicitude to avoid fresh wars and fresh failures.
>
> Thus, a century later, Europe appears not only morally debased, but so far removed from the Europe of that time, so far inferior, that one cannot conceive how so great a decadence has been possible. The new democracies reveal themselves to us as greedy, corrupt, and afflicted with external idealism and internal greed. As Lloyd George once said, they look like Bayard and act like Shylock, incapable of practicing any kind of warfare but violence and intrigue.

If one looks for a psychological explanation of these contradictions, he will probably come to the conclusion that, more than anything else, an angry self-righteousness spurred on by an inner sense of guilt dictated the policies of the "new democracies." It is certain that the Europe of the past thirty years has been a Europe built upon the treacherously shifting foundations of moral insecurity. Was there ever an epoch of history in which the leaders of men and nations searched more hysterically for scapegoats on which to blame their troubles? This psycho-moral perspective of the twentieth century has the further advantage of reducing the second world war to a comprehensible event—the logical member of a series of happenings arising from the hypocrisies of the age. And, in this perspective, the war ceases to be the worst thing that has happened to mankind, and its place in the catalog of infamy is taken by the moral bewilderment suffered by both leaders and led. Not war, but the incapacity to recognize the roots of peace in human trust, is the incalculable evil which Ignazio Silone finds afflicting the Italian people. Not war, but the moral impotence of the individual, is the sterilizer of human hopes, according to American novelists. Not war, but the decay of *moral ideas*, is the terrible diagnosis of the modern world.

From the viewpoint of unthinking, mass

reactions, this makes the world ripe for picking by "strong men" who deliberately avoid any sort of "progressive" appeal, and who offer only order and security, without abstract or "philosophical" justifications. If the Bourbons learned nothing, forgot nothing, remembered nothing, you could at least know what a Bourbon would do. From the point of view of intelligent revaluation, such developments lead to a study of the actual condition of man under various sorts of rulers and theories of government—a study in which the ideological slogans and promises are disregarded and attention concentrated on the facts. The principled activist tends toward anarchism and the dilettantes and demagogues toward totalitarian "realism."

These, at any rate, are among the reasons for the contemporary interest in conservatism as a social philosophy. For some, it is a movement from the present to the past; for others—the few—it is an exchange of policy for principle; and for still others, it is the discovery of a new arsenal of slogans and precepts from which to make a living writing books. For the age, and the larger history of human beings, it is both a release from old illusions and an opportunity for greater honesty in social conceptions, provided honesty is what is wanted by the peoples of the world.

COMMENTARY
THE NOT-SO-FREE PRESS

A COMMUNICATION from the United States to the *New Statesman and Nation* for Sept. 3 causes us to remind MANAS readers of Paul Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (discussed under Review, Aug. 3). The *N S & N* correspondent, Norman MacKenzie, calls particular attention to the difficulty met by any critic of the Catholic Church in getting published, noting that Mr. Blanshard's book appeared as a result of "the initiative of a small Unitarian publishing house," the Beacon Press, of Boston. We should like to echo this approval. The record of the metropolitan press in reviewing this book is also of interest. As Mr. MacKenzie says:

> . . . one must also note the treatment this important book has received from the newspapers. Only four papers outside New York have reviewed it so far. The New York *Times* gave it a cursory notice at the end of its book supplement, but refused to carry more than one small advertisement for it. The *Herald Tribune*, a month late, reviewed it during the week, but omitted any review from its Sunday book section. The Catholic Press, on the contrary, has given the book a great deal of critical attention, thus disposing of the weak presence that the book is unworthy of notice. It has, incidentally, already sold more than 40,000 copies.

"Catholic power," so far as freedom of the American press is concerned, is amply demonstrated by this record. Meanwhile, the big newspapers of the country show no reluctance to print for the Knights of Columbus a current series of advertisements concerned with the Catholic faith. One recent ad has the heading, "The Bible Is a Catholic Book"—a statement which is unobjectionable for the reason that it is quite true—and continues with the information that the "73 inspired books" of the Bible were selected by the Church. Then this claim is made: "It is the infallible authority of the Catholic Church that always has been the only sure guarantee of its [the Bible's] inspiration."

Some may suppose that Mr. Blanshard undertook to challenge statements of this sort. He did not. His book is a study of the *social effects* of such beliefs, as embodied in the policies of the Church in relation to a democratic society—a level of criticism which should hold no offensiveness to any religious community. The *Nation*, however, in which portions of *American Freedom and Catholic Power* first appeared as articles, is still banned from the libraries of the public school system of New York City.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

> "If we are to assume that children already have a more highly developed moral capacity than is commonly thought, or as you put it, are already 'souls,' should a parent's role ever exceed that of the confidential adviser? Should a parent decide that a child is incapable of handling a given situation and therefore prevent him from entering it? Such a policy, it seems, would deny the child the right to enter into this experience, thereby stunting his ability to develop self-reliance and moral stamina."

THIS sort of question needs a lot of breaking down, for it is so generalized that any conclusion in terms of the question might produce more confusion than clarity if later used as a governing rule. The classical question asked of those who speak as if they would "always" favor letting the child make his own decisions usually goes something like this: "If a very young child is about to drink some ant poison, is it not essential to prevent him, regardless of what his own desire might be and regardless of how theoretically good it is to learn from one's own experience?"

But such a formulation leaves entirely out of account the factor of the child's *conscious awareness* of the situation. Does the child actually *desire* to imbibe the contents of the bottle, and is that desire conscious enough to maintain itself over a fairly lengthy period? To prevent a child from burning or harming himself or from damaging household articles is not necessarily "interference" with the child, since interference can only conceivably arise when the child's *mind* is set upon do even such a formulation as the last often becomes the excuse for the thousand-and-one negative commands based on the premise that the child "really does not know what he is doing." Sometimes the child *may* know, even when he is very young, and for a reason that is not easily communicable to parents, but which has some definite connection with his own mental growth and development. In such instances the object of desire is never something like ant poison, being often just a *desire* for deviation, directed against something the child does not like to have required of him. For instance, a refusal to eat a certain kind of food, to go to bed at the appointed time, arrive for meals punctually, wash his face, etc.

Some parents have shown a measure of wisdom in letting the child know that if he *still* finds he wants to do whatever he presently wishes to do, just as much, a day or two days later, he will be allowed to make the decision—but that too much inconvenience is going to be caused the parents for the deviation to be allowed *unless* the parents are sure the child thinks in a sustained fashion. As the child grows older, it seems especially necessary for parents to approach the problem of opposing their child's desires with these considerations in mind.

We cannot determine very easily just what are the adolescent's abilities to "handle the situation," but we can be sure that the restraining influence most helpful is that already described—avoiding the categorical "No" and leaving the matter open for consideration after a short lapse of time. Of course, some exponents of this theory take advantage of it unwisely by indefinitely postponing the child's right to make his own decisions: "After you are another year older," or, "When you have grown up," has very nearly the psychological ill-effect of a flat negative. A few hours of postponement is probably sufficient for very young children, a day or two for those in their early teens, and something up to a week may be adequate for adolescents. The principle involved is that of leaving the child with the feeling that he *can* make his decisions, but that the parents' involvement necessitates their being sure that the child really wants what he wants. And the practical advantage of such a method is that it can be applied from babyhood until marriage by parents who have enough good sense to wish to remain natural and helpful influences in a child's life, without dominating. Then, too, there should always be some areas in the lives of even the

youngest children where they are completely free to do whatever they wish. The experience of the "Town and Country School" in New York, previously noted here, is a forceful argument for letting the child keep a certain corner of a room or yard in as much disarray as his small heart desires.

If some version of this procedure is followed, we can be said to have made a good start, but this method will not, of course, actually solve the crucial problems. The parent who is striving to enact the role of "confidential adviser" and who allows a fairly wide latitude of free choice will yet inevitably encounter instances where the child decides against the advice given. In such instances we come to one of the most difficult tests of a parent's patience, integrity, and intelligence. It is easy for the parent to *appear* to give the child free choice as long as the child gracefully follows the lines indicated by "advice." But when the child deliberately rejects the advice, the reaction of disappointment and annoyance is usually very hard for the parent to overcome. However, if these emotions are indulged, the role of "confidential adviser" will become more and more of a sham; the child will be thoroughly aware of its lack of genuineness and be encouraged to become increasingly devious about things of which he feels his parents may not approve.

At a certain point it is imperative for the parent to become quite literally detached from the child's decision. His responsibility rather lies in clarifying the relationship between the child's refusal to accept the advice and his relationship with the household. This brings us again to the need for asserting the benefits of a "Contract Theory of Education"—some basis of mutual understanding in regard to what the child and parent may do for each other, for how long and for what reasons. There is a minimum obligation, for each parent, to provide certain things for the physical well-being of the child, for the parent is in a position of responsibility towards someone too young to provide these things for himself. But over and above this minimum it seems advisable to work out all parental provisions in terms of some mutual understanding as to what both wish and agree to give and receive. The parent does not "owe" his child "every advantage" supplied by the neighbors to their children. The child does not "owe" instant and complete obedience in respect to every detail—nor does either of them even *owe* the emotional feeling called love, because love cannot be "owed," but only freely given.

With these premises in mind, both the parent and the child may be able to *feel* a working relationship through mutual understanding—one which possesses its impersonal and *detached* aspects as well as its personal and involved ones. The word "detached" is emphasized because of the need, in each child-parent relationship, for an attitude of mind equivalent to that with which the parent or the child meets a newcomer. Usually, we are not really "surprised" or "hurt" by what a newcomer says or does, and are therefore better able to give just evaluation to his actions. Possessiveness blocks growth, and leaves people with little experience of Love, however much they use the word in association with remonstrances and complaints.

FRONTIERS

Science and Moral Freedom

BRUCE STEWART'S "Challenge to Social Science" in *Science* for Aug. 19 is a good article for critical study since it exhibits both the brilliance and what may be called the "blind spots" of the progressive social scientist of this generation.

It is brilliant in its brief survey of the new moral problems created by the industrial revolution. In application to industry, communication and transportation, Science has transformed the idea of human interdependence—previously a metaphysical concept of religious systems such as Buddhism—into an everywhere evident material reality. Before the shift from an agrarian to an industrial culture, the moral situation of a human being could be regarded in relative isolation. As Mr. Stewart says, "When the simple life prevailed, contacts were individual, relationships were uncomplicated and characterized by a high degree of self-sufficiency and independence." Today, however, the problems of men are largely defined by their relationships with one another as members of groups or masses of human beings. Stewart writes:

> This interdependence has led to an extension of moral values from the personal and community level to the national and international level. Individual morality becomes inadequate when it is possible for a person to refrain from stealing from his neighbor, lying to him, cheating or killing him and yet advocate national or international policies that lead to mass destruction of peoples. The most humane and kindly individuals may be greatly disturbed at the suffering of one child, but innocently contribute to wholesale suffering and death thousands of miles away.
>
> Mass civilization has impersonalized relationships between men. When one killed with a sword, he saw his antagonist fall, saw his blood, and heard his dying gasps. To the killer this was real. In modern war a plane flies over a city, a man in the plane presses a button, and ten thousand people may die. The killer himself is only the final link in a long, mechanized and impersonal chain of events, and he does not witness the deaths of the people he kills.

From such circumstances Mr. Stewart concludes that, in order to be "moral," people now need "much greater knowledge of national and world events." This may be so, but it is difficult to see how a man with more than ordinary political understanding of the forces governing world events of the past twenty years could have gained anything but a sense of futility and impotence from his insight. He would have wanted to cut himself off from the insanities of the nations, yet would have found that quite impossible, politically. The problem goes far deeper than politics. It has to do with the domination of individual human beings—who are the moral units, the *responsible* units, of society—by vast *systems* of behavior. But if Stewart has not clearly defined the problem, he has at least described succinctly its most dramatic phase.

Another passage of this article deals with the subjection of science to psychological and commercial vested interests. Social science ought to be free and unbiased—this is a minimum requirement. Yet—

> How many agencies can the reader name that subsidize the analysis and reconstruction of human institutions without respect to the results? Yet the value of objectivity has been demonstrated in the physical sciences. Newton had no patents on gravitation, nor did Pasteur and Koch have an investment to protect when the virus was discovered to be another cause of disease besides the bacterium.
>
> The NAM will sponsor an investigation whose conclusion has already been established, and the CIO will spend money to prove the opposite. People in such organizations do not invite even the most helpful criticism. Lobbies, pressure groups, and influential business interests represent highly effective instruments for thwarting scientific attack on problems.

While E. Douglas Hume's *Béchamp or Pasteur?* would suggest that Pasteur was not so free from bias or special interest as Stewart seems to think, it may be admitted that individuals are less likely than institutions to attempt to pervert scientific inquiry to private ends. And it follows

that the more highly a society is organized into pressure groups, the less the possibility of impartial social science.

These are Stewart's major points: (1) the extension of moral responsibility from personal, "old-fashioned" morality to the larger scope of social behavior; and (2) the difficulty of obtaining support for wholly honest and impartial social science. The latter part of his article is devoted to suggestions for making social science more effective, and it is these suggestions which ought to be thoroughly examined. First, social science needs a "few fundamental principles." This will be admitted at once. For there to be any science at all about human beings, the principle of *causation* in social affairs must be recognized.

> If [Stewart writes] we applied that principle we would renounce such attitudes as blame and condemnation of sin. These attitudes lead us away from cure and prevention of human ills. No physicist would kick his apparatus because it didn't work right.

Here, again, agreement is not difficult, but in rushing past the problem of "blame," without further comment, Mr. Stewart gets rid of the primary problem of responsibility without giving us so much as a whisper of advice. Blame and condemnation of others seems to be a deep-seated habit in human beings, as well as a bad mistake. It might be called the illegitimate child of a sense of responsibility—instead of blaming ourselves, we blame others. So, a man might argue: if I am not to blame others, then I am not to blame myself. If there is no such thing as "sin"—if these others have no responsibility for what they do, then neither have I. Obviously, the question of causation in human affairs is of the greatest importance. If it is the objective of social science to discover all decisive causation of human behavior in external circumstances, then it is also the objective of social science to abolish morality entirely. We are not entirely sure what Mr. Stewart means when he says:

> Recognizing the principle of cause would mean also abandoning the prevalent attempt to interpret social phenomena in terms of what is "right" or what "ought to be." The scientific approach does not begin with ideas in mind about what nature "ought to do," but recognizes that fundamental laws operate to cause events to take place in the observed way. We are compelled to discover these basic realities and adjust our own acts accordingly so as to derive the maximum advantage and control of nature.

We may be under a misapprehension, but it certainly seems on the surface that Mr. Stewart is very much concerned with what "ought to be" with regard to his hopes for social science. Then, in other connections, he uses terms like "humane" and "kindly." Surely these are qualities which he thinks "ought to be" more widely distributed and more intelligently informed. Now if such terms have any meaning at all, they stand for the moral qualities of human beings, and they are *intrinsic* qualities, not something stamped on people by external causation. They may, of course, be encouraged by environmental influences, but the environment does not create them.

In other words, what we want is a clear admission to the effect that the human individual, in a determining sense, is the causal factor in his own life. Social science would then be concerned with the secondary influences of social causation: the weight of tradition, the modifying influence of education, and all the varying effects of the human community upon the individual. Or, failing this, there should be the alternative of a flat denial of any moral independence of the individual, in the interest of clarity.

It would be foolish, of course, to ask a social scientist or any one at all to play at being Solomon and to tell us just where individual responsibility ceases and social causation takes over. But if we do have moral freedom, it is certainly vital for each individual to recognize this problem in his own life and to claim more and more of his own moral decisions—to become *more* responsible that is, instead of less. And it is the central obligation of any science with the behavior of human beings for its field of investigation to point this out. The present tendency of such science, however, is to seek to extend the empire of scientific

"objectivity" over the entire realm of human action. This was natural in physics, excusable in biology, but in relation to the conduct of self-conscious beings it becomes a kind of technical fascism.

The uselessness of blaming or condemning others for what they do is a result of our inability to know what goes on in the hearts of other people. We have some chance of knowing our own hearts, and can therefore hold ourselves responsible—and if we could get rid of our religious heritage of innate sinfulness, we might be able to translate the idea of human weakness into a reasonable account of the moral struggle which confronts every human being. But a balanced moral outlook will not be possible so long as social scientists continue to go to the other extreme by implying that the moral struggle does not even exist—that all behavior is "caused" by influences beyond human control. Mr. Stewart does not exactly say this. He touches the question only obliquely, as befits a man trained to ignore the metaphysical implications which hide within the problems of science. But that, we think, is the main defect of his discussion. The question of the moral freedom and the moral responsibility of individuals needs open consideration above all else.