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GREAT REFORMERS: ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE extraordinary influence of Albert Einstein is one of the wonders of the age. It is easy to see why Isaac Newton affected the world of thought as greatly as he did. Newton made the movements of the heavenly bodies accessible to reason. A machine is a familiar object—anyone can understand how it works—or, at least, *feel* that he understands. And to convert the major phenomena of matter and its motions from mysteries into simplicities, according to the analogy of the machine, was Newton's contribution to human thought.

But Einstein, Einstein converted these simplicities back into mysteries again—for most of us, at any rate. Yet Einstein's greatness is almost universally acknowledged. Why should this be?

One explanation, perhaps, is that we feel that the reasons behind the things we see ought to be subtler than the machine explanation. A kind of release from dull, "mechanical" certainty is suggested by the Einstein Theory. A machine is an extremely external device. It has no inner life. If everything, from atom to cosmos, works according to the machine principle, then Destiny is something that is boxed and delivered according to rigid, mechanical laws, and we human beings are partly impotent subjects of the delivery, and partly impotent spectators. Perhaps a deep distrust of this unsatisfying aspect of the Newtonian cosmology is behind the popular reverence for Albert Einstein. Perhaps, too, the more human longing for romance makes us want a universe that slide rules cannot wholly explain.

Albert Einstein was born in 1879 at Ulm, in Bavaria. A year later the Einsteins moved to Munich, where Albert spent the days of his childhood and youth. His father was a small manufacturer, his mother a person of artistic sensibilities who loved music. They were not orthodox Jews. Of Hermann Einstein, the father, Philipp Frank says in his life of Einstein, "The dietary laws and other customary usages of the Jewish community were to him only an ancient superstition, and in his house there was no trace of any Jewish custom." The family loved literature and poetry, and the home was pervaded by the spirit of Heine and Schiller instead of the sombre tone of the Hebraic scriptures.

As a child, Einstein was known as a "dreamer" who avoided the active play of other children. Military games and displays were particularly repugnant to him. When his parents promised him that he, too, could some day march as a soldier in a parade, he said: "When I grow up I don't want to be one of those poor people." Instead of the exhilaration of the martial spirit, Einstein saw in parades the coercion of human beings—"a movement of people compelled to be machines." Einstein's basic character was formed early in life. As Frank puts it:

> At this time Einstein apparently already revealed one of his most characteristic traits: his intractable hatred of any form of coercion arbitrarily imposed by one group of people on another. He detested the idea of the oppressor preventing the oppressed from following their inclinations and developing their natural talents, and turning them into automatons. On the other hand Albert was also conscious of the natural laws of the universe; he felt that there are great eternal laws of nature. As a child he was able to understand them only in the form of traditional religion, and felt attracted to it and its ritual precepts which symbolized a feeling for the laws of the universe. He was offended by the fact that his father always scoffed at religion, and he regarded this derision as resulting from a type of thought that is in a certain sense disharmonious and refuses to submit to the eternal laws of nature. This dual attitude—hatred for the arbitrary laws of man and devotion to the laws of nature—has accompanied Einstein throughout his life and explains many of his

actions that have been considered peculiar and inconsistent.

While at the age of nine, the young Einstein revealed no special talents, and his lack of fluency in speech had been noted by his teachers, he was known to his schoolmates as *Biedermeier* (Honest John) because of his special propensity for telling the truth. Another quality was that he never expressed himself until he had reflected upon what he was going to say.

His school days were not eventful. He went through experiences which might be expected of the combination of a boy of his character with the dictatorial German educational system of the time. He was largely self-educated, for he devoured books on natural science. He was good at mathematics, but found difficulty in studying subjects which did not interest him. Eventually, he developed a strong resistance to all routine methods of instruction, so that a brief stay in Italy with his family and the experience of the more liberal Italian schools brought him great pleasure. The need to earn a living led to Einstein's enrollment in the Polytechnic School in Zurich, Switzerland. Here, Einstein discovered the classics of theoretical physics, the works of Helmholtz, Kirchoff, Boltzmann, Maxwell, and Hertz. Hermann Minkowski, who later gave Einstein's ideas their mathematical formulation, was a lecturer at the Polytechnic, but in those days Einstein was bored by Minkowski's classes!

Einstein graduated from the Polytechnic School in 1901. He was twenty-one years old and had become a Swiss citizen, but he had no job. He worked briefly as a tutor, but lost this position because he objected to the spoiling of his pupils by other teachers. After some dark days of unemployment, he finally gained an appointment to the Patent Office in Bern. This gave him a comfortable income, interesting work, and time to think. Einstein was now to enter upon his great adventures of the mind.

Four years later, in 1905, Einstein published his Theory of Relativity, destining him to be drawn on to fame and a kind of "fortune" by the irresistible force of his discoveries, acting upon his contemporaries. In 1909 he was appointed professor of theoretical physics at the University of Zurich. A year later, he accepted the chair of theoretical physics at the University of Prague, the oldest university in Central Europe. Then, in 1913, he was invited to teach in the famous Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin and to become a member of the Royal Prussian Academy of Science. He remained in the Academy until 1933, when he resigned in protest to the policies of the Nazis. Late in that year, he undertook his new duties at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, New Jersey, where he has remained ever since, although he retired from his "official" position in 1945.

What, exactly, did the Einstein Theory do to the idea of the world we live in? Asked this question by American reporters who greeted him upon his first visit to the United States, he replied:

> "If you will not take the answer too seriously and consider it only as a kind of a joke, then I can explain it as follows. It was formerly believed that if all material things disappeared out of the universe, time and space would be left. According to the relativity theory, however, time and space disappear together with the things." (Quoted by Philipp Frank in *Einstein: His Life and Times,* Knopf, 1947, p. 179)

This is as good a point of departure as any from which to consider, not the Einstein Theory itself, but its general implications and impact on modern thought. Newton's world was a world in which absolute time and absolute space presided in absolute indifference over what went on within them. Time and space, for Newton, were theological rather than physical conceptions. They were the changeless framework of reality. Infinite duration ticked off its moments regardless of matter, motion, and man. Infinitely extensible space was a roofless, wall-less, bottomless Euclidean continuum in which the stars and planets swam.

These two, space and time, were the scene of the Cosmos, not parts of it. Einstein made them

parts. Actually, Newton regarded space as an aspect of Deity—"He supposes," a friend and student of Newton wrote, "that as God is present in space where there is no body, he is present in space when a body is also present." Space, for Newton, probably meant "the Divine Sensorium" of the Cambridge Platonists, to whose views he was much inclined. But when "God" was removed from physics as the absolute cause of physical phenomena—of gravitation, for example—nothing was left but a mathematical formula which *described* the action of gravitation, but did not explain it. As Lange remarks in his *History of Materialism, "The course of history has eliminated this unknown material cause, and has placed the mathematical law in the rank of physical causes."*

As a result of Einstein's work, space, time and matter are inextricably mingled as parts, expressions or aspects of one reality, and no single aspect of that reality can exist without the other. Einstein might title his writings about relativity: "On the Integration of Events with their Environment." The events create the environment and the environment frames the events. And as all external perceptions take place within some limits, all observable environments are finite; and, therefore, "physical" space and measurable time, being the environment of events, are limited and finite.

Although Einstein has been consistently unsympathetic to all attempts to found new metaphysical systems upon his discovery—he told the worried Archbishop of Canterbury that Relativity would have *no* effect on religion—many of the men who interested themselves in Einstein's thought from the beginning did so for philosophical reasons. They felt that Einstein had laid the foundations for a new beginning in philosophy, and perhaps for religion as well. Somehow, Einstein's new universe seemed to be *alive*. Indeed, the field theory of physics has since spread to biology and may eventually take over even psychology—the "field" idea, that is, may be adopted by psychologists who see no future in the mechanistic approach to mental phenomena.

For the overtones of the actual content of the Einstein Theory, two books ought to be read: *The Evolution of Physics*, by Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld (Simon and Schuster, 1938), and the Philipp Frank biography, which is also an excellent interpretation of the Theory for the layman. Then, for an intimate account of Einstein's personal life, there is *Einstein* by Dimitri Marianoff, a Russian journalist who married Einstein's stepdaughter and lived in his house for eight years.

Reading of this sort suggests that the real reason for Einstein's popularity is that, both for what he is and for what he has done, Einstein makes the rest of us proud that we are human beings—he is a credit to the human race in a period of history which has very few credits on the side of mankind. His personal character, which is one of uncompromising integrity, confirms what we all *want* to be true—that greatness is both moral and intellectual. In method, he belongs with the Platonists. "It was a characteristic feature of Einstein's mode of work," Frank writes, "to deduce from his fundamental principles all the logical consequences to the limit"—the Platonic method. In a lecture at Oxford on his theory of knowledge, Einstein said:

> It is my conviction that pure mathematical construction enables us to discover the concepts and laws connecting them, which give us the key to the understanding of the phenomena of nature. Experience can, of course, guide us in our choice of serviceable mathematical concepts; it cannot possibly be the source from which they are derived.
>
> In a certain sense, therefore, I hold it to be true that pure thought is competent to comprehend the real as the ancients dreamed.

Einstein's reverence for nature is not rhetorical. His pronouncements on religion and science are not studied efforts at reconciling intellectual or institutional differences, but a spontaneous reaction to the living experience of his mind. What he says, therefore, has the

peculiar power of felt reality. One has the expectation that if experimental means of verifying his philosophical intuitions could be made available, the latter would be found to be as accurate as his predictions of physical laws based upon the reasoning of the Relativity Theory.

Nothing has been said of Einstein's pacifism, his work on behalf of the Zionists, his ever-ready sympathy for the problems of students, his instinctive acceptance of all human beings regardless of status, his rejection of anthropomorphic religion, his disregard of the artificialities of polite "respectability," and, finally, his exquisite sense of humor. Of these qualities, the humor seems the most important. When asked about his reaction to the plaudits of the multitude, he pointed out, "They cheer prize-fighters, too." When told in Berlin that a patriotic society of women in the United States had passed a resolution protesting his admission to the United States, calling him a "dangerous" pacifist, he remarked to the reporters that the cackling of geese had once saved Rome, and that the ladies might be right. When a zealous student on the campus of an American university crowded up to Einstein and challenged him: "Isn't everything you have discovered part of God's Plan?" Einstein replied graciously, "Shall we not have to ask God that?"

There are more ways than one to effect reforms. The reforms instituted by Albert Einstein belong primarily to the order of the mind—they are seminal for the science and philosophy of the future. But they are also human, illustrated in the flowering of a completely natural man.

Letter from

ENGLAND

LONDON.—"In all the ranges of human thought," wrote John Ruskin in *Unto This Last* (1862), "I know none so melancholy as the speculations of political economists on the population question." He was disputing especially the validity of the doctrine put forward by Ricardo that "the natural rate of wages" is "that which will maintain the labourer." For Ruskin, the important problem in this connection was, "Maintain him, how?"

This criticism comes to mind when we peruse the report here last summer of the Royal Commission on Population, which, appointed in 1944, has spent the intervening years inquiring into the facts concerning British population trends, their causes and probable consequences, and considering "what measures, if any, should be taken in the national interest to influence the future trend of population."

Britain's population has grown from about 7 millions in 1700 to 49 millions today. This increase is accepted as an essential condition of Great Britain becoming and remaining a strong and rich nation, the centre of a great Commonwealth, a large colonial empire, and a commercial system whose ramifications covered the whole world. The rate of increase of population has slackened because the birth rate, starting to drop in the 1870's, came to fall faster than the death rate. This fall was due to a decline in the number of children born per married couple (the average size of the family). Couples married in the mid-Victorian era produced on the average 5↕ to 6 live-born children; but, among the couples married in 1925-29, the figure may be estimated at 2.2.

The Royal Commission note the often-quoted fact that the better educated parents and those with the higher incomes have families not only below replacement level but smaller in size than those of the less well off or less intelligent. And, in a discussion of the reasons for family limitation, they cite as the chief cause the spread of deliberate control of the birth-rate, the growth of science last century, and the new knowledge of man's origin and development, making it easier to break down the psychological barriers to contraception. That the change in Great Britain began about 1880 may have been due (in the Commission's opinion) to the economic depression of the late 1870's onwards, and to the Bradlaugh-Besant trial of 1877 which gave widespread publicity to the fact that control of conception was possible. The judgment of the Royal Commission is that "no changes in the social environment are likely to lead men and women to abandon this means of control over their circumstances."

The general conclusion of the Report is that there is need for a moderate increase in the size of families, and it surveys welfare and housing conditions that may influence a trend in this direction. It also suggests a Commonwealth inquiry into emigration problems in view of a diminishing home population. But nowhere does the Commission give any evidence of interest in the moral problems involved in artificial limitation of births, or in the relationship between the British population question and the larger world issue of increasing pressure upon dwindling resources. Nor are defence problems envisaged directly, though they are implicit in many of the Report's analyses and recommendations. Professor J. B. S. Haldane has suggested elsewhere that the human species could easily survive an atomic war in which a tenth of its members had been exterminated; but if a tenth were affected by gamma radiation to the extent of passing on artificially-induced mutations to their offspring, the species would be doomed. And Aldous Huxley has remarked *(World Review,* November, 1948):

> It is merely silly to talk about Human Dignity and the Four Freedoms in relation to a country such as India, where almost half of the inhabitants die before they are ten years old; where two-thirds die

before they are thirty; and where, none the less, the total population rises by fifty millions every decade.

The truth is that no solution of these population problems is possible except in relation to the world situation or on any grounds of materialistic science. Contraception does violence to man's deepest moral nature, and it may yet prove to be the modern version of that sterility which marked the decay of ancient races. It is futile to speculate on these questions unless we are clear in our minds as to the true nature of man and his purpose as a spiritual being. The co-ordinates of our world and civilization have gone awry, and population problems suffer from the prevailing anarchy of views as to the kind of existence appropriate to human beings if they are to be brought into orderly relationship with a living universe.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

MODERN "RATIONALISM"

Two publications which this Department receives and reads with interest, but seldom refers to, are the English *Literary Guide and Rationalist Review* and the American *Humanist,* both monthlies, and both drawing upon much the same intellectual and moral background. These papers are part of a current of thought which came into prominence during the last half of the nineteenth century. In England, a leading figure in the Freethought movement was Charles Bradlaugh; in the United States, Robert G. Ingersoll championed militant atheism and led the attack of freethinkers on theological dogma.

A wonderfully ardent and optimistic spirit pervaded the works and words of the nineteenth-century free-thinkers. They were fighting the good fight against the powers of darkness. They spoke with the conscious virtue of men who were sure they were right, and who willingly made themselves targets for bigoted denunciation. There are not very many left of the veterans of this period, although its mood may be sampled in some of the publications of Haldeman-Julius of Girard, Kans. (the "Little Blue Books"), in the writings of Joseph McCabe, and the books of Joseph Wheless and Joseph Lewis of the Freethinkers of America. Ten or fifteen years ago, it was still possible to hear some gnarled old hand of the atheistic fraternity rise in a public meeting to set the youngsters right by quoting Ernst Haeckel. This was usually done with short, staccato declarations about the animal origin of the human species, the fraud of all religions and the stupidity of any sort of metaphysical beliefs.

In 1894, the Truthseeker Company, today the New York representative of the *Literary Gnide,* published a history, *Four Hundred Years of Freethought.* The author, Samuel Putnam, provides a kind of credo for the Freethought movement in his Introduction, some portions of which will illustrate the temper of the movement at that time. The style is almost flamboyant:

> The eternal spirit of Freethought is the spirit of doubt. Freethought never ceases to inquire, to question, and to deny. It utterly abhors faith. . . .
>
> Freethought doubts; but Freethought builds. Truth is its object; but there is only one way to reach truth— through facts.
>
> The scientific method is the one universal method. There is no *a priori* royal road to truth. There is only the common road, the toilsome common-sense path of observation and induction. . . .
>
> Freethought rejects intuitions, revelations, and high sounding words, which have no meaning. It rejects God and Immortality as entirely outside of attainable truth. Freethought confesses the limitations of the human mind. To go outside of those limits is to become the slave of an imperious desire. We are not free when we think in obedience to an emotion. We are free only when we stick to facts. . .

In the fifty years and more since this was written, a great change has taken place in the Freethought movement. Orthodoxy in religion having become much less influential, the debate with theology is more of a rearguard action than a frontal attack. And instead of being aggressively atheistic, freethinkers are now somberly agnostic, using dry humor against their cassocked adversaries instead of the brickbats of scientific "fact." Freethinkers are also more "sophisticated," intellectually. What "science" is and where it will lead us is not half so clear as it was half a century ago. Today, science is a vast, sprawling field of institutionalized research and few scientists of the present would welcome Mr. Putnam's naïve endorsement. Mr. Putnam rejects "intuition"; but today, Mr. Einstein calls it the key to the most basic discoveries of science. And there are many other scientists who would question Putnam's certainty in marking off the limitations of the human mind. An important branch of modern research, Parapsychology, is now busily engaged in extending those limits. Dr. Rhine and his associates are finding some new or hitherto unrecognized facts "to stick to"—facts which may

prove somewhat subversive of other portions of Mr. Putnam's credo.

Whatever the cause or causes, rationalists themselves are far less dogmatic in their denunciations and denials than they were fifty years ago. *Literary Guide* for October presents an article, "Am I a Rationalist?" by Eric Glascow, which seems to incorporate nearly all the values of rationalist criticism of orthodox theology, while rejecting agnostic negativism. To old-time rationalism's confession of "the limitations of the human mind," Mr. Glascow replies:

> A confession of ignorance is sometimes inevitable and even valuable, since it does not inhibit further inquiry. On the other hand, if it is too frequent it tends to suggest that the examination has been cursory and superficial. Agnosticism has never satisfied me, nor can I forget the grim imprisonment of those who can find no reality in the world beyond what is apparent to their mortal eyes. There are circumstances in which faith is a sign of courage, denial a sign of weakness, and merely to reject or attack orthodox opinions is not enough. . . . The conflict between reason and religion is artificial, the result of blindness and narrow-mindedness on both sides, and it is an urgent task to remove the barriers which have for so long bred antagonism and distrust. The real enemy is dogmatism, arising out of a failure to survey the whole truth through the windows clouded by bias of various kinds; and that may be found in Bradlaugh and Holyoake as well as in the Roman Catholic Church.

Mr. Glascow's essential position is that reason may lead to metaphysical conviction as well as to skeptical denial—he maintains that he has himself come to conclusions which may be called "spiritual" in content, wholly on the grounds of rational reflection upon what is given in human experience. "The world," he says, "is too complicated to be simply a fortuitous agglomeration of atoms. Mind and body are not the only elements which make up human beings; there is also soul, not to be neglected because it is so intangible, which responds to the thrill of music, poetry, art, scenic beauty, and high ideals, and which is strangely attached to self-sacrifice and disinterested aspiration."

He will, however, accept no substitute for reason—the right of independent decision in questions of religious philosophy. He defines the neo-orthodox return to tradition in contemporary religion, with its emphasis on literal Revelation and miracles, as "a distasteful combination of reactionary panic, sour defeatism, and verbal credulity, which looks suspiciously like a failure of nerve, just at a time when confidence is sorely needed."

While the terms "God," "supernatural" and "Revelation" figure in Mr. Glascow's credo, it is evident that he means what he says—that for each of these ideas he has his own reasoned background of meaning, often a meaning with little or nothing in common with orthodox belief. "God," for example, is the "Divine Spirit pervading the world"; the "supernatural" seems to mean simply a superphysical order of reality, not necessarily "unnatural"; and for him, revelation is not beyond reason or criticism—"It is spiritual, not verbal or literal in character, and has to be received by fallible human minds before it can be offered to the world. . . . It is the essence rather than the form, the spirit rather than the letter. . . . In this guise revelation cannot be set against reason and it is transformed into the liberator, not the gaoler, of mankind."

Mr. Glascow claims to be a rationalist, on the ground that his convictions have all had to pass the bar of reason. It is, we think, a just claim.

The *Humanist,* while more a cousin of the *Literary Guide* than a member of the same intellectual family, reflects the same general tendencies. Probably no publication is more vigilant in its efforts to maintain the separation of Church and State in the United States—a natural function of agnostics. The *Humanist,* too, pursues a policy of cautious open-mindedness toward metaphysical ideas. A frequent contributor to its pages is Prof. Edwin A. Burtt, of Cornell University, who may be taken as a representative of the same spirit of honest inquiry as Mr. Glascow exhibits. We have no sample at

hand of Prof. Burtt's writing in the *Humanist,* but the closing passage of his outstanding study, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science,* will illustrate his outlook:

> An adequate cosmology will only begin to be written when an adequate philosophy of mind has appeared, and such a philosophy of mind must provide full satisfaction both for the motives of the behaviorists who wish to make mind material for experimental manipulation and exact measurement, and for the idealists who wish to see the startling difference between a universe without mind and a universe organized into a living and sensitive unity through mind properly accounted for. I hope some readers of these pages will catch glimmerings of how this seemingly impossible reconciliation is to be brought about. For myself I must admit that, as yet, it is beyond me, and only insist that whatever may turn out to be the solution, an indispensable part of its foundation will be clear historical insight into the antecedents of our present thought-world. . . .

Obviously, Mr. Glascow and Prof. Burtt are not "typical" rationalists and humanists; the majority of the contributors to these journals have more of the old spirit than the new; the point is, a quality of genuine intellectual impartiality is beginning to characterize rationalist and humanist thinking. The trend, it seems to us, has unlimited possibilities.

BRASS CURTAIN

A MANAS reader with intimate knowledge of the facts writes in detail concerning the treatment accorded by the American Consulate at Hamburg to Prof. Franz Termer, dean of Hamburg University, and Germany's foremost authority on American ethnology and archeology. Prof. Termer had been invited to participate in the biennial International Congress of Americanists, held in New York last Sept. 5-12. The sponsors were especially eager to have this eminent scientist attend, and all his traveling expenses and maintenance were to be borne by the Viking Fund. On June 15, the U. S. Consul in Hamburg definitely refused him a visa, and Prof. Termer gave up hope of coming to America. Fortunately, Dr. A. V. Kidder, of the Carnegie Institution, intervened in Washington and Prof. Ackerknecht of the University of Wisconsin, on a visit to Hamburg, made energetic protests to the Consulate. Finally, on Aug. 5, just twenty-three days before his scheduled departure, the visa was issued. Mrs. Termer, however, was denied permission to come, although she, too, is connected with the Hamburg Museum of Anthropology, of which Prof. Termer is director, and although she also had an official invitation from the Congress, and all her expenses were to have been paid.

This scholar of international repute was allowed only a three-week stay in the United States, as compared with the stay of six months permitted him by Mexico. In Mexico, he will be able to study archeological sites which have been developed during the past ten years.

The International Congress of Americanists is a venerable institution of scientists which was founded in France seventy-four years ago. Except for wars and like contingencies, the Congress has met every two years, first on one side of the Atlantic, then on the other. The next meeting will be in 1952, at Cambridge University.

The correspondent supplying us with these details had himself an experience of the "brass curtain" of American officialdom last year, when, despite a commission from the Smithsonian Institution to study certain material at the Hamburg Museum, he was refused permission by the AMG to go there for only two days. He had provided food for himself in advance and had the promise of lodging with the Termers, so that this seems a clear instance of reasonless bureaucratic negativism. As he says, "Yet when Russia refuses to send delegates to international scientific congresses, we rant against the Iron Curtain!"

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

A RECENT article, in the September *Woman's Home Companion,* "Let's Stop Blaming the Parents," presents a thought-provoking discussion of the problem of "parents versus children." The writer, Howard Whitman, makes a strong plea for modifying the extremity of the statements made by some teachers and amateur "psychologists" who localize "the blame" for backward and delinquent children in parental conditioning. He quotes a psychiatric social worker who calls attention to cases in which the parents were made to feel so "guilty" that they lost their nerve for the task of child upbringing: "Mothers and fathers come in with intense feelings of self-accusation and blame. They say, 'I am to blame, I know it's all my fault.' We can't begin to help them until we clear away these feelings of failure."

There is little doubt that this column becomes involved in such criticism, for much of what we have written has dwelt extensively upon what seem to us typical psychological errors of parents. But we feel that there is a significant difference between directing generalized Blame to a parent or parents and pointing out specific instances where parental methods can clearly stand improvement. Our further defense would be that we have addressed ourselves principally to those parents who are themselves incessantly complaining against—in other words, "blaming"—their children for certain attitudes and habits. Blame is a destructive psychological force, no matter by whom employed.

In 1943 a San Francisco group promoted the idea of forcing parents to go to school to learn what to do about their delinquent children. Parents who did not attend were to be threatened with some vague sort of court action. But no one seriously concerned with juvenile delinquency ever seeks scapegoats—rather he tries to help all those involved in the situation—including the parents—toward a cooperative solution affording opportunities for better relationships. It is always spectacular, of course, to attack and blame. Psychologists sometimes please youthful audiences and ladies' clubs with diatribes "against the parents." "If your parents tell you this," said one professor in a large University last year, "don't believe them for a minute. They are hypocrites."

It is certainly desirable for parents to cultivate the capacity to absorb self-criticism from psychologists and teachers, but it is ridiculous to believe that psychologists, any more than priests, can help human beings to mature by issuing generalizations of blame. Specific suggestions, no matter how critical they may be, of certain types of child management by parents, are often much needed, but it is not the *parent* who is to be held to "blame," even in such instances. It is rather a method or an idea which is under question, and for which the psychologist should courteously request reconsideration.

If child-psychologists or social workers limited their criticisms of parents to those instances where harsh words and harsh relationships have developed—as a result of parents perpetually telling children what they "should" or "ought" to do—instances in which parents are guilty of that fundamental error which leads human beings to believe they have a right to expect specific attitudes on the part of relations and close friends—Mr. Whitman's criticism would not be valid. Mr. Whitman's contentions are valid, however, partly because of the way many child psychologists talk to their public: They frequently indulge the habit of patronizing and talking down to laymen.

Criticism of parental attitudes toward children is a necessity, but to be most effective it should be directed *at attitudes,* not persons. Perhaps it takes a philosopher to see the difference between criticizing a person and some idea or attitude he holds, but it seems to us that we must all become philosophers to this extent. If we are able to, even in small degree, we may help to banish the whole concept of "blame." Blame is but another word

for self-righteousness in all those instances where we adversely judge the character of another human being, and in other instances is but another word for the congealing beliefs in one's own moral weakness—an idea which used to be symbolized by "original sin." If we convince parents that, in the case of imperfect relations between themselves and their children, the first need is to "establish" blame, we will probably further both of these tendencies. Some parents will sink so far into self-accusation and into an unnecessarily developed sense of personal unworthiness that they will fail to give initiative and guidance. Others will accept a portion of the blame—that portion covered by the diatribes of the child psychologists they happen to read—and then will carry a residue of the psychology of "blame" on to place on the heads of their children. In such instances; parents will reason that blame can be apportioned, and that they can only be held accountable for their proper share.

It would seem to us that we need to develop the capacity to separate justifiable criticism of ideas and methods from the denunciation of human beings. The hate psychology of most warfare grows into a destructive demon only when this separation is not made. History should help us to see that it is completely illogical and unscientific—not to say fascistic—to blame the human beings of any opposing national contingent as being creatures of less moral capacity than ourselves. What was wrong with the German people? Sociologists will some day tell us unequivocally that nothing was wrong with them that was not wrong with us at the same time, although circumstances encouraged them to develop and crystallize attitudes and methods which have been less dominant in our own cultural pattern. The infantile warfare between the Republicans and the Democrats often reaches the same neurotic proportions, as do all forms of political conflict in any country. Some of the Asiatics, most notably the Indians, come the closest to demonstrating that one may battle strenuously to uproot a certain concept and substitute another without hating or despising the men who champion a different cause. Many of the Indian leaders have conserved their energy during political difficulties, wasting no emotional hatred, and concentrating all of their faculties in a positive direction towards the accomplishment of the end desired. The same method will serve the parent who wishes to "correct" undesirable attributes of the child's personality. He does not have to dislike the child in any fundamental sense, while he can help the child to understand why he *does* dislike certain attitudes which that child, along with other human beings, indulges.

Perhaps there will always be conflicts and adjustments between human beings, and perhaps the most practical goal is not to arrive at some system which will presumably end conflict, but rather to reach a point of view that will enable us to keep all of our "warfare," whether domestic or international, in *the realm of ideas.* This, in itself, is a large order. In the first place, we would probably have to repudiate the court action which recently imprisoned eleven prominent Communists for holding ideas dissimilar to our own.

FRONTIERS

The New Medicine

MANY years ago, in an essay, "The Energies of Men," William James marvelled at the hidden capacities of human beings for withstanding extreme rigors. A man never knows what he can do, James suggested, until he is confronted by an extreme situation and *has* to draw upon every ounce of his energy, determination and fortitude. It seems appropriate to recall the thesis of this essay as frequently as possible, these days, if only as a bulwark against unrelieved pessimism, for the predictions of specialists in almost every field are spelling out the promise of disaster for the entire human race.

One great area demanding immediate attention is the fertility of the soil. Books describing the depredations of erosion and wasteful farming methods have surveyed the field—a bit hysterically, according to some critics— and a world-wide movement has been born to work against the ravaging exploitation of the earth's natural resources. Similar groups are conducting educational and practical programs to restore the nutritive value of common foods. But despite these efforts, the statistical picture of agricultural and dietary emergency would suggest a very dark future if it were not for the uncounted resources of human beings. The really vital consideration, of course, is in the idea that these resources are *human* potentialities, and will not be aroused to action if it is supposed that, somehow, "God" will intervene at the last minute, or that some technological miracle will wipe out the score against our civilization.

This sort of reflection seems particularly pertinent in the realm of public health and the practice of social or "psychosocial" medicine. It is natural, perhaps, that the greatest strides of progress in modern medicine have been made during the past two or three decades, a time when the symptoms of psychological and physiological degeneration have been increasing at an ominous rate. As a corrective science, more concerned with the elimination of specific disorders than with "pure research," medicine could hardly be expected to anticipate the sort of illnesses that were to develop during the first half of the twentieth century, so that clear medical concepts of the importance of mental attitudes in relation to health are of extremely recent origin. Twenty or thirty years ago, for most physicians, a disease was a definite entity, usually caused by a definite "bug." The problem of the doctor was to kill or discourage the bug. A disease that could not be defined in terms of bacteriology was a disease that did not interest the great majority of physicians. Medicine was practiced according to concepts of specific cause, and if an illness did not fit the prevailing concepts, the doctors tried to redefine the illness instead of changing the concepts.

Today, informed doctors take an entirely different view. They are compelled to by clinical experience. In the *Progressive* for November, Dr. John A. Schindler presents the new view popularly, for the layman, saying that half the people who go to the doctor in the United States, today, are sick with one disease—psychosomatic illness.

> It is an illness [he writes] we ought to know a little more about, for if anything, I have been understating its prevalence. Many doctors would put the figures higher. As a matter of fact, the Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans published a paper a couple of years ago reviewing 500 consecutive patient admissions, and of that number 386, or 76%, were sick with this one disease.

What is psychosomatic illness? The commonest illustration is peptic ulcer. In the United States, for example, the incidence of peptic ulcer increased 44 per cent during the war among the white population, and 133 per cent among Negroes. Asthma, another psychosomatic affection, increased 73 per cent among whites and 100 per cent among Negroes. Other indices show similar effects. During a period of exceptionally severe unemployment in Scotland (1930-35),

gastritis increased by 120 per cent, nervous debility by 100 per cent, anemia by 80 per cent, and rheumatism and cardiac debility by 60 per cent.

These figures are taken from James L. Halliday's *Psychosocial Medicine, A Study of the Sick Society* (Norton, 1948). While several books on psychosomatic medicine are now in print, this one, we think, is probably the best. Dr. Halliday is as much a philosopher as he is a physician, while his scientific background makes for clarity and precise statement. It is a book which any layman who reads carefully can understand. Although the idea of a psychically "sick society" has been developed by other writers—for example, by Karen Homey in *The Neurotic Personality of our Time*—this book, while noticing also the problems of individuals, makes extensive use of gross social symptoms of group disintegration such as decline in the birth rate, the prevalence of anxiety states, and the effects of war.

Much of Dr. Halliday's study is devoted to the problem of *why* people get psychosomatically ill. It soon becomes evident that very little is known about this problem. The diagnoses, that is, are bound to be formulated at a level which only defines the problem of health in terms of new unknown factors. Dr. Halliday writes:

> . . . as far as present knowledge goes, we do not know whether the present biological trend toward progressive devitalization and genetic extinction is or is not reversible. What we do know is that only in so far as human beings can be persuaded to face consciously the problem of the sick society (which is both within and without us), is the trend toward devitalization, even toward genetic extinction (either gradual, as in ever increasing infertility, or abrupt, as in atomic war), likely to be checked. The practical problem therefore is: How can individuals become aware of the situation?
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> . . . there does exist scientific medical knowledge of the sick society and appreciation of what it means to the individuals contained within it. This knowledge, imperfect and inadequate as it is, if apprehended and followed up could become an instrument for saving man from his slide toward chaos. If this sounds like a gospel, well and good, it is a gospel. For the new medicine implies a new outlook and a new vision which are not only intellectual, but "spiritual" in that they concern life and the regeneration of life.

Thus, as Paracelsus might have insisted some four hundred years ago, what a man thinks about is far more important for his health and well-being than the bugs that bite him.

The doctors Dr. Halliday is talking about—the men who look upon their patients as human beings, not as test tubes in which certain chemical reactions are proceeding—are really resuscitators of the principles of Paracelsian medicine. Like the great medical reformer, they have a "gospel." Its direction is put by the author of *Psychosocial Medicine* in a few words:

> Physical scientists, being specialists, mistook their particular branch of science for SCIENCE instead of the partial science that it was. Like nearly all specialists, they were dead to life. Had they been alive to life they would have seen that what was really happening was that man's destiny, far from being controlled, had got more and more out of hand. Fortunately, science is now becoming more SCIENTIFIC by beginning to look at nature, not only in its physical aspects, but also in its "spiritual" aspects. In so far as this happens we obtain a wider and truer awareness of nature, and our thoughts, feelings, and actions become altered to be more in consonance with the nature of NATURE.