VOLUME V, NO. 50
DECEMBER 10, 1952

A MORAL EQUIVALENT OF PEACE

THOSE who are familiar with William James's famous essay, "A Moral Equivalent of War," may wonder a little at this title, yet peace, as we know it today, and as James knew it in his day, is as much in need of a moral equivalent as war. As James wrote (in *McClure's* for August, 1910):

> "Peace" in military mouths is a synonym for "war expected." The word has become a pure provocative, and no government wishing peace sincerely should allow it ever to be printed in a newspaper. Every up-to-date dictionary should say that "peace" and "war" mean the same thing, now *in posse,* now *in actu.* It may even reasonably be said that the intensely sharp competitive *preparation* for war by the nations *is the real war,* permanent, unceasing; and that the battles are only a sort of public verification of the mastery gained during the "peace"-interval.

Taking James at his word, then a moral equivalent of peace would hardly be different from a moral equivalent of war, except, perhaps, that it would not give special attention to what James called the "martial type of character." Peace may be defined as the good life—the kind of a life we all of us imagine as the fulfillment of our most idealistic dreams. We commonly suppose that the good life requires a very different environment from the one we have, so that we are thrown back upon whatever moral equivalents we can devise. We might begin, then, by proposing that the good life involves at least three kinds of activities: (1) a practical activity which relates the individual to his material environment; (2) a theoretical activity which relates him to social and individual ideals, and gives direction to his practical activity; and (3) an ethical activity which relates him to his fellows and the rest of life and nature, while establishing the values on which his ideals are based.

While the above order of these activities is the familiar one, they obviously ought to be reversed, so that the ethical activity comes first. One recalls the tragi-comic dilemma of the descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers, living on sequestered Pitcairn Island in the Pacific, endeavoring conscientiously to practice their Seventh-Day Adventist religion by refusing to raise coffee—the only crop that would earn them a decent living—because they believed that coffee-drinking was a sin. With these peaceful and gentle islanders, the ethical outlook determined the practical activity, even though it cost them dear. Some may regard their scruples as a bit ridiculous, but the principle of making the means of livelihood conform to ethical principle is not ridiculous. Arthur E. Morgan, one of the few really pioneer educators America has had, added these words to a published edition of the diaries of his early youth (issued by Mrs. Morgan):

> As for the sporting attitude toward life—the determination never to make any concessions to one's ultimate purposes—I have never gone too far, often not far enough. When starting for the West at nineteen, I determined never to do a day's work for pay where the normal and natural results of that day's work would not be of human value, and I never quite starved on that program. I realized that to live wisely by such a standard, one's ideas of values must include the whole range of legitimate human needs, both the practical and material and the so-called "impractical" hungers of human nature. My failures have been due to living not closely enough in accordance with my convictions, and in not using ordinary common sense in applying them in specific cases. Good will is only potent when associated with intelligence. *(Finding His World.)*

Happy the man who can make such a confession!

What about the theoretical activity? Only through deliberate, reflective social thinking can a man rise above the purely personal virtues in his daily existence. Last week's leading article described the decision of some French "capitalists" to go "Communitarian." There are doubtless

countless ways for a man with ability and means to use his resources constructively—the point, here, is that it is necessary to think about the social relationships of mankind in order to make one's contribution count for as much as possible. Every one of these European businessmen or manufacturers was a social theoretician before he became a communitarian. First he thought about the relationship of man to man in Western society, and then he acted to improve that relationship. Further, he acted, not only as an idealistic economic reformer, but also as an educator.

Another illustration of a man engaging in theoretical activity is found in the life of John Collier. After years of study of the tribal communities of the Indians and other non-industrialized peoples, Mr. Collier finally gained opportunity to apply some of the things he learned. Obliged by modern conditions of social organization to work as a government administrator of a great national power, Mr. Collier doubtless found many discouragements, but a reading of his *Indians of the Americas* shows how much good can be accomplished when the three factors of good will, intelligence, and authority are united in a single man.

The important consideration is that without the hard thinking and study, neither good will nor authority can be of very much value, and may do actual harm. Thinking and study, on the other hand, even without any political authority at all, often prove incalculably useful when there is good will. One may find innumerable instances of individuals who have sought problem situations in their communities and helped to work them out—men who have befriended gangs of under-privileged boys; women who have taught children from homes barren of culture to draw, sing, and dance; doctors who have worked sixteen or eighteen hours a day to found clinics and hospitals in areas without facilities for medical care. Consider the intensity of the theoretical thinking of a man like Gandhi. Where did he obtain his sustained convictions about the sources of peace? How was he able to have an answer for every question, based upon the principles he had evolved?

If we look back upon the two thousand and some years of European history, we soon see that it was the theoreticians, the dreamers, and the Utopians who were responsible for the creative surges of progress—for the ideals which other men came to share and for which they lived or died. Socrates has a place in the heart of every civilized Westerner. Thomas Paine bequeathed tendons of mind to every lover of liberty. What if Socrates was executed and Paine died in disappointment and neglect? Was their end more terrible than the fate of the countless millions who have marched like automata to an early death at the order of their commanding officers, during the past fifty years?

Let us begin to honor and imitate the great men of the peaceful arts—the art of thinking, above all. Men who acquire the habit of thinking become like seeds awaiting their hour to burst into blossom. Each man can think according to some scale or perspective within the range of his understanding. We do not need "specialists" to pursue such inquiry. A man who works out principles in his mind and then puts them to work in a particular field is not a specialist, but a whole man with principles in common with other men like himself. That is why, perhaps, great men often seem so simple and unpretentious. It is the specialist's lack of general principles which makes him hard to understand, not his "overwhelming" knowledge, which, after all, is often not very important.

The ethical activity is the most important and the most difficult. From it a man gains orientation for all other activities in his life. Words, perhaps, are more misleading on this subject than on any other, yet we feel constrained to add that ethical philosophizing can hardly be successful in any permanent way unless it is united with metaphysics. By metaphysics we mean the effort a man makes to understand himself and his

relationships with the rest of the world. A pantheist, for example, is likely to have a view of individual responsibility that is very different from the view of a man who believes he was created by a personal God and who hopes he was saved from eternal damnation because some brutal people nailed another man to a cross some two thousand years ago. The man who feels that within him hides a fragment of the highest divinity, however he may belie it in his life, has at least a fire of inspiration which is his own. He can become a savior of other men because he has learned the secret of salvation. The man for whom both life and death are but aspects of the eternal goings and comings of nature, fears neither, and learns to accept and welcome both. Such a man, having become a philosopher, is free, and being free, he spreads the beneficence of his freedom wherever he goes.

So we discover, finally, that the good life is really independent of its environment, and that it is the direction taken by human independence which determines whether or not life is good. Both peace and the good life, then, are together made up of judgment, action, and inquiry, and are possible at any time and under any circumstances, although, at some times and in some circumstances, both seem inaccessible or difficult. Yet it is the movement in their direction which creates peace and the good life. A man may feel that he is "caught" among the cogs of the economic machine, that he lives, almost as a parasite, on the waste or the extravagance of his time. This is hard to bear, but at least he has discovered the fact, and now needs to reconcile himself, not with the fact, but with the rate at which he is able to change the fact. Not everyone realizes at nineteen the importance of working to create human value, but to realize it at any age may still be the most important discovery a man can make in his entire life. For the world will never be at peace until enough men make this discovery.

Letter from **JAPAN**

TOKYO.—The initial furor over the case of the two British seamen who went on a drinking spree, robbed a Japanese taxi-driver of 1,700 yen (about $4.75), made off with the taxi and caused an international incident, has died down. But the British sailors are still in a Japanese prison, waiting for the court to make up its mind what to do. Much has been written—both for and against—the positions taken by the British and the Japanese governments on this case.

The most interesting feature of this incident is that both sides have legal basis for their claims. The British, for instance, objected strenuously to the sentence of two-and-a-half-years' imprisonment passed against the two offenders. The British claimed, and rightly, that the sentence was too heavy for the "prank" of two drunken boys who stole less than five dollars. But from the position of Japanese law, theft and assault (the Japanese taxi-driver was beaten) constitute a serious crime for which the minimum sentence is five years. The Japanese thus point out that the sentence on the British seamen was exceedingly light.

This incident would probably have passed unnoticed, however, except for the fact that Japan, having regained her independence, is in the process of negotiating the problem of judicial jurisdiction over criminal cases involving Allied nationals other than the United States Security Forces. The status of the latter, of course, was clarified in the Administrative Agreement which accompanied the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

The British claim that since they constituted a part of the United Nations forces and participated in the indirect defense of Japan, their servicemen should receive the same treatment as the American troops. The Japanese, on the other hand, countered that the status of the American forces, who are in Japan under the defense pact and are entitled to trial by their own court martial, is entirely different from that of British troops over whom Japanese have jurisdiction if they commit a crime on Japanese territory and against Japanese nationals.

The main issue of the bitter arguments, however, was really the question of national sovereignty—whatever the outward aspects might have shown. Britain has been on the defensive for some time, as is illustrated by the Arab-Asian outburst of nationalistic feeling of recent years directed against her. It is understandable that the British should resent an action which would establish different rules for Americans and for Britons. It would seem like another withdrawal from the proud heritage which was Britain's as a sovereign world power.

On the other hand, Japan, having only recently regained her independence, is extremely sensitive over any sign of an infringement upon her sovereign position. Japan is in the position of having to prove that she is independent, not only to her neighbors and the world community as a whole, but also to herself. If this is understood, it should not be difficult to imagine Japan's jealous concern for preserving her sovereign rights against anything which might resemble even slightly the granting of extraterritorial privileges. Indeed, the Japanese Government came under severe fire for agreeing to give up her jurisdictional rights over American servicemen and their dependents.

If both nations had been more sure of their sovereignty and possessed of the tolerance and magnanimity which derive from a sense of confidence, the bitter squabble over jurisdictional rights might not have occurred in this unfortunate case of the two British seamen. The Japanese officials could have handed the two erring sailors over to their commanding officers, instead of making a show of their authority. Or, the British diplomatic officials could have appeared at the trial of the sailors to plead for their release, instead of refusing stubbornly to recognize the right of the Japanese courts to try the two offenders

But eminent leaders, both British and Japanese, have argued that they must stand firm on their position because a "principle" is involved. But to some of us the "principle" of a nation trying to prove that no one can push it around has served only to disclose the childishness and pettiness of nations suffering from an inferiority complex.

JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
NOTES ON NOVELS

WE should like to see some statistics on the increase of both novelists and readers of novels, for we think it likely that the upswing is extreme and that this trend indicates more than the easy availability of a plenitude of low-cost fiction. There are many readers, we find, who obtain more stimulation to serious thought from novels, particularly in regard to war and "race" issues, than from scientific or religious treatises. A good work of fiction often serves, too, as a focus for exchange of ideas, and may become, for a time, a provocative of mental progress within a family or intimate neighborhood group; so that, all in all, we may realize that novels have every bit as much to do with education as they do with art. This is easy to assert about well-written war novels, for instance, for two reasons: First, a novelist has more freedom of expression than other writers, and we can always learn something from the fervent and free. Second, how can you possibly understand the general "war situation," and the interlocking psychologies incident to years of war preparation, from a mere documented history of events? The real meaning of war is in terms of the psychic and mental alterations effected in individuals, and the novelist has exceptional opportunity for this kind of portrayal.

But along with the good novels—and we think there have been many of these since World War II—there is a host of also-rans, and plenty of extremely poor representatives of the art of fiction. While the latter hardly merit "review," a cursory inspection of the volumes occupying the bulging drug store shelves may justify some notes in passing. One division of mass-appeal literature represents "sensation-titilation," achieved either by way of crime and violence or by way of pornography. Readers gravitate toward this supply, obviously, because of one or more of three impulses—first, the impulse to escape, for a time, from a life devoid of adventure, excitement and risk; second, a neurotic drive toward wish-fulfillment; and, third, the childish satisfaction derived from reading about people whose dire straits are so dire that the reader's humdrum security seems rather blessed by comparison. Books of this sort, we think, need no further discussion, although it must be granted they are not always easy to miss, since the good books among the pocket editions are adorned with covers just as frantic.

Imitations of the pioneers in good and bad literature alike, unfortunately, now do most of the shelf-bulging. Particularly in respect to the war novels one finds abundant evidence of makeshifts, Ralph Leveridge's *Walk on the Water* being a good illustration. Mr. Leveridge seems to have picked up all of Norman Mailer's morbidity but little of his power and coherence, and a Freudian might see in this book evidence of the author's fascination by "the death-wish." It is not surprising, of course, to find the "death-wish" manifesting widely today, since the whole trend of civilization is toward further involvement in war, but we have never believed that any useful purpose is served by dwelling upon the dark and forbidding aspects of life. (Leveridge, like many another "death-wisher," is not even really Freudian, for Freud was a rational man who sought to balance perspectives, and Leveridge is a purely emotional writer.) Another current example of long brooding over personality destruction is Loren Wahl's *The Invisible Glass,* though here we find some excellent side-notes on racial segregation, with contrast of Southern and Northern attitudes toward equality of opportunity for Negroes.

MacKinlay Kantor should be able to rank above the also-rans, but when he discusses men and women in a war situation he still drives his characters with the sensual obsessions first manifested in his beautifully titled but essentially morbid Civil War story, *Long Remember.* Kantor's current *Don't Touch Me is* an attempt by a major novelist to use the Korean war for a

backdrop, but is largely a "Freudian-type" fantasy, devoid of any real inspiration or beauty.

By comparison with such books, it becomes easy enough to admire an author such as Nevil Shute. Although we must regretfully admit agreement with Clifton Fadiman's judgment of *The Far Land,* Shute's latest novel, as of less "quality" than his other works, there is a calming satisfaction in the simple story of two Europeans who build a new and better life in Australia. The plot moves slowly, as do the lives of the leading characters, whose virtues are as old as time and whose happiness is based upon simple things, but perhaps Shute felt that someone should offer this change of pace to an already jittery reading public. And, in *The Far Land,* there is much of hope and affirmation. A man and a woman actually come through the war without signs of ruptured personality, and perhaps there is value in believing this to be possible even for someone like the Polish doctor who holds a fine character intact through several years of life in a concentration camp. Mika Waltari's *A Stranger Came to the Farm* is another attempt to recapture the values of a "simple life" close to the land, though violence and death finally intrude. And, we think, this orientation becomes Waltari better than the amoral flamboyance of *The Adventurer* and *The Wanderer.*

It is an interesting curiosity of modern fiction that while mediocre novels may contain passages of remarkable insight, other books which fall below a certain point in the slope descending from excellence contain nothing useful or quotable. An author simply can't "do it with mirrors," by way of a calculated decision to enter into competitive manufacture. A writer with something to say, even if only on one or two of his crammed pages, *must* be something of a philosopher—must be trying to understand and portray people more than trying to make a "plot." And some of the "half good" or "half bad" books at least offer moments of pointed understanding and clear expression.

In concluding these casual reflections we wish to present some dialogue from Vance Bourjaily's *The End of My Life,* a novel which probably belongs in this last category. In the course of still another death-wish (*a la* F. Scott Fitzgerald) development, Bourjaily seems to furnish, in passing, a lucid version of intelligent campus commentary on modern war. More than a few undergraduates, we think, have felt like this:

> "Damn it," Skinner said, "an education should prepare you either to live with other people, or to live with yourself. After two and a half years of college, I don't like other people, and I can't stand myself."
>
> "Air Corps?"
>
> "Love to be in a plane. But I'm just not sold on the war." Then, thinking about it, he said, "I could have flown well in Spain."
>
> "Skinner, what the hell do you want? It's not 1937, and you can't go to Spain. This is our war, for better or for worse."
>
> "Until death do us join. I want a nice, small war, Jeff, with clearcut issues. There should be more than just a villain you can hate. There should be a side you can love, too."
>
> "I don't think so," said Jeff. "I think it's enough just to love the guys you're fighting beside."
>
> "Sure. That's enough, subjectively, to carry you through the actual fighting. But you need something else to get you into it in the first place."
>
> "They've got a law."
>
> "They damn well need it."
>
> "Why don't you have a nice, long struggle with your soul, and decide you're a conshie?"
>
> "Not a good enough guy."
>
> "So what do you want?"
>
> "I want to do something decisive. It's too damn hot for indecision." He sat down, stretched his legs, and looked at the ceiling.

Skinner's attitude persists throughout the story, leading him finally to half-hearted participation in the war and whole-hearted denial of the worth of human life. This is tragic, and it is real, for we know more than a few who have followed Skinner's course. Here is the fate of

youths who see too clearly to believe in political slogans, yet find nothing to replace their disillusionment. Skinner, after becoming a volunteer ambulance driver, still feels the same way, and remarks:

> I promised myself that, whatever happened, whether I flew or fought or drove, I'd never take this war seriously. And I never will. It's just a big joke. If I get killed, it's the biggest joke of all. I'm not even hoping for decency in it. It would upset me to find it. I've believed all my life that life was indecent, and that war is the most grossly indecent thing of all, history's way of proving that man is born a heel. I'm not going around looking for salvation. All I want is confirmation.

Yes, the modern novels tell us a good deal about ourselves as a society—how badly people wish to escape, how much they long for adventure, how analytical insight is increasing, yet how profoundly disillusioned many of us are apt to become. But every novelist who is more than an imitator and who reflects something besides the "death-wish" in his pages is at least creative according to his light. This is unquestionably more than can be said for numberless well-clothed, well-fed, and well-housed individuals who show no interest at all in the psychological issues of human existence.

COMMENTARY
HAS WILL A "SOCIAL BASIS"?

CITATIONS of medical opinion on Alcoholism (see Frontiers) need to be balanced by lay attitudes and reactions. For example, the published claim of a doctor that the hope of controlling the drink habit by will power is a "popular misconception" brought the following rejoinder from a reader:

> This seems to me a most mischievous thing to assert. It tends to weaken the efforts of drink addicts who are earnestly trying, . . . by will power and a growing sense of proper pride and duty to family and public. I personally know many who have succeeded and are now leading decent, normal lives. . . . We get these amazing suggestions by specialists from time to time, as when recently we were told that no one over 40 should take exercise, or heart trouble would result.

What this doctor condemned, however, was a wholly "negative" resistance to the habit, showing that in his experience the patients who tried to overcome drinking by "willing" found themselves haunted by the idea of liquor as a result. Yet there must be an intelligent way of invoking the will, even though it may involve even greater psychological mysteries than the disease of alcoholism. Alcoholics Anonymous seems to have accomplished more in this direction than the medical men. A writer in the *San Quentin News* (California State Prison newspaper) has explained the approach of AA members to the victim of drink:

> He is merely asked to believe that there is a Higher Power to which he can turn for help, and is permitted to formulate his own conception of God. . . Some call this inner being the Higher Self. Others refer to it as the Ego. The most common term applied to it is the Soul. . . . Only a brother alcoholic knows the suffering of a victim, and only a rehabilitated alcoholic can speak the language which convinces the down-and-outer. The tolerance and patience manifested by graduate members of this order is astounding. . . .

While by no means an "explanation" of the mystery of "will," these comments suggest that moral strength may be a group as well as an individual resource. Speaking of the origins of the French Communities of Work, Marcel Barbu remarked, "When two poor people get together, they are that much less poor." From evidence of this sort, we may perhaps conclude that the social basis of moral failure lies in self-righteousness and condemnation, while the social basis of moral success is in understanding and interdependence. This formulation may leave relatively untouched the problem of individual moral strength, but it does show how men can help one another.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

REMARKS in the Preface to a bulky volume on comparative education by Prof. Henry Moehlman give opportunity for quoting from another work a passage we have long wished to present to readers.

> We as human beings [Moehlman says] live in a symbolic universe that we create ourselves. . . . Universal education offers the best opportunities to create a wise and realistic symbolic world rather than one which is manipulated by the dead hand of the past.

What are the symbols manipulated by the "dead hand of the past"? A. Gordon Melvin's *History of Education* summarizes succinctly much that we all know, in a sense, concerning these symbols, yet of which we must often remind ourselves:

> Can it be disputed that the education of young Americans has been in any serious way different from the education of the English, the Russians, the Germans, or the Japanese? After visiting schools in every one of these countries, and after talking with eminent educators, I for one can say that all had much in common. There were local differences. Japan was intensely set on expansion, Germany and Russia educated the young for war. But in the spirit of the times, in the secular quality of the school atmosphere, in the fact that children were given directions as to how to do things, but not given values by which they could choose the good from the bad, all these civilizations looked alike to me. The spirit of what I found in one was there in some degree in all. National self-aggrandizement was everywhere, in some countries more than in others. The Japanese bowed to the emperor's picture, the Chinese bowed before the photograph of Sun Yat-sen. An English schoolmaster in London showed me the shrine of the World War dead in his school. In Germany I saw Hitler's photograph, and in Italy that of Mussolini in every classroom. In the United States the salute to the flag was a regular part of public school routine.
>
> In Russia and in Germany the development of the modern view fostered in public school was associated with the persecution of members of all religious groups. Is this spirit entirely absent in this country? Is it not rather a revelation of the fact that the mood of the country has been set against other than materialistic guides to conduct?
>
> Can it possibly be that public education has failed civilization? Before either of the modern wars C. Hanford Henderson wrote: "Judged by their fruits, the public schools of America have not been successful. . . . The failure of the public school is coming to be an article of somewhat general belief. But the failure had been made to consist in the fact that the school turns out a crowd of white-handed clerks and stenographers rather than an adequate number of skilled artisans. The remedy offered is vocational education. But the defect, I believe, is much deeper. It is that the public school fails to turn out a moral product. Americans are shrewd, and in a way extremely practical, but they are not moral. They do not tell the truth, and they cannot be trusted in money matters. We are a highly intelligent people, but our intelligence lacks depth. We play about the surface of life, and ignore the deeper issues. As a result we have done astonishing things in a material way, but very little in matters of general importance. . . .
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> "The desire of the public school to be universal, to offend none, to include all, is in itself wholly praiseworthy; it explains, though it does not excuse, the entire divorce which it has instituted between education and religion. But the task set for itself by the public school is frankly impossible, and failure was inevitable. Education is an inner process; it has to do with the essential things of the spirit; it cannot be accomplished except through the spirit."
>
> Whether or not we agree with Henderson, it is quite clear that Americans have been practical enough to win a war, but not spiritual enough to prevent one.

This discussion is an excellent point of departure for analyzing the psychological attitudes from which alienating and divisive symbols arise. Do we, in the home, insist that we are "right" in any dispute with our child, simply because we are parents? That our authority is the only true authority and our knowledge and wisdom are not to be questioned? Do we establish our relationships with the members of our own families on the basis of an unspoken claim to infallible competence rather than by *demonstrating* competence in a manner which can be recognized by all? Do we "quote authority" to

buttress purely personal and partial viewpoints? Do we use the "fear-technique" when we desire to protect our children from dangerous adventures? Do we scheme for the acquisition of money to such an extent that we give the lie to pieties suggesting that morals are more important than finances? Do we lie to our children to protect our authority? Do we conceive *our* religion and our politics to be allegiances to which we can, without their consent, consecrate the lives of our children?

The symbols of nationalism do not grow of themselves, but are rather extensions of the attitudes of mind which carry us through daily experience. We shall never be able to prevent war, nor will any future generations, unless we somehow develop and transmit modes of evaluation different from those to which we are accustomed. We cannot, in other words, be devoted to truth, which alone can make men free of defensive actions and concealments, until we recognize that truth is never representable by conventional social, political, or religious symbols.

But Dr. Melvin's observations may also be considered arguments for the revival of religious education, as opposed to "the secular atmosphere" he found prevailing in all countries. That a militant or arrogant anti-religious secularism prevents the development of ethical insight may be true enough, and for this reason, perhaps, William O. Douglas said what he did in the Supreme Court majority opinion approving released-time privileges in the New York Public Schools. Certainly the "Founding Fathers" of the United States were not "anti-religious." They sought to inculcate attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect between Christians and non-Christians. It was also their intention, however, to see that the State remained secular, in the sense of avoiding any partisan role in sectarian competitions. The impartial, impersonal approach to religious issues, the determination to encourage the comparative study of religious ethics, insures a humane temper, something which the American Indians of pre-Columbian times respected as capacity to see a "brother's vision."

Secular*ism* is something else again, and we feel that Dr. Melvin's analysis could be improved by noting that any "ism" is by definition partial and divisive. Religionism and secularism are indistinguishable in the sense that factional religions always resort to political maneuvers involving coercion, and secular anti-religious movements also become doctrinaire and fanatical.

Our present international tensions need to be evaluated by a sympathetic comparison of differing symbols, so that it can be gradually realized that the Russians and the Americans—or any other groups professing differing ideologies—have much in common in both aspirations and failings. The Russians, for instance, have been indoctrinated with the feeling that their State must be kept free of the evils of capitalism, while we, in this country, proclaim the necessity of being free from arbitrary controls of economic and political life. In both cases there is a conception of freedom, but in both cases the chief emphasis is upon freedom "from" something, rather than upon full freedom of individual opinion. Current movements designed to form a solid ideological phalanx against Godless Communism by a "Christian" unity will only deepen our blindness to the evils of factionalism—and also deepen the hostility of the Russians, who understand us no better than we understand them.

FRONTIERS

A Psychological Mystery

THE moral factors involved in the use of alcoholic drinks are doubtless important, but we shall never know how to assess them until we understand the psychological factors. Discussing the latter years ago in the *New England Journal of Medicine,* two psychiatrists reported that among a group of 124 drunkards (24 of them female), they found every conceivable variety of personality. There was no single "personality trait" which united the patients. The only thing in common was "addiction to alcohol." They did say, however, that the feelings of inferiority which plagued a number of the patients seemed related to "wife's, parents' and friends' exhortations, threats, and so forth, and it is, we believe, these influences which . . . are largely responsible for those personality trends which alcoholic patients have been supposed to possess in common."

The problem of drinking is brought to the fore by a thoughtful article in the *Christian Century* for Nov. 19, in which the writer, Ansley Cunningham Moore, describes his experiences as a "Midnight Minister" on a counseling program presented over the air by a Pittsburgh council of churches. The program broadcasted conversations between Mr. Moore and persons who called in anonymously on the telephone to ask help with their problems. On the first night of this program, 1,045 people tried to talk to the Midnight Minister during the half-hour available. Alcohol, he found, was at the root of many of the problems of people driven to seek his counsel. The very first call was typical:

> In five seconds the phone rang. . . . A soft, cultured but distressed voice said: "My husband is now drunk and asleep on the sofa in the living room. He has just broken up the toys I bought for our children's Santa Claus. What must I do?"

Mr. Moore does not report his answer—what could he say?—but continues by setting the problem with statistics:

> Eighty-five per cent of the arrests brought before the morals court in Pittsburgh each morning have drinking the night before as the basis of the trouble. Many of our leading church people drink. Some clergymen drink. Many church officers are not opposed to drinking. Since so many of our problems arise today from the drink habit, it may turn out in the end that this is America's number one social problem. We now have 50 million drinking Americans, 3 million chronic drinkers, 1 million alcoholics of whom 750,000 are men. The fact that per capita consumption of alcohol is greater in Washington than anywhere else in the country may account for some of the foggy thinking that originates in that world capital.

Mr. Moore's article continues well, saying intelligently and effectively what he might be expected to say, and some things that might be unexpected, such as that beer is a serious offender in producing alcoholism. We shall leave him, however, for the reason that he seems interested, chiefly, in establishing that the use of alcohol compounds social and moral disaster. While it may be important to realize this, the spreading around of such facts has accomplished very little toward the reduction of drinking.

Nine years ago, Arizona was the last state in the Union to join the other states in making instruction in the nature of alcohol and its effects on human beings a compulsory course in the public elementary schools. Many states specify the time to be devoted to the subject and require that suitable textbooks be used. In addition to this, there are numerous private bodies devoted to public education on the subject of drink. Medical bodies give it constant attention, while special committees and boards are wholly engaged in the study of alcoholism. Meanwhile, despite all this research and educational effort, drinking continues to increase and its victims grow in number.

Most physicians and psychiatrists regard excessive drinking as strictly a medical problem. Dr. E. M. Jellinek of the Yale School of Alcoholic Studies has called "problem drinking" as much of a disease as cancer, adding that this "won't dawn on society as a whole for another 30 years."

Bernard Glueck, a New York psychiatrist, has said that curing drunkenness is made difficult by the fact that people regard it as "funny," asking for a public campaign against drunkenness similar to the campaigns against syphilis and tuberculosis. Another doctor declared it a "popular misconception" that drinking can be controlled by will-power, resolutions or abstinence pledges. He told a scientific convention that "willing" against drinking makes the problem worse for the individual by keeping liquor constantly on his mind. Psychological confirmation of this view comes from Dr. Edward Spencer Cowles of the Body and Mind Foundation in New York, with the statement that chronic alcoholism "is not a matter of morals or will power, but a brain chemistry disease." This report continues:

> A chronic alcoholic, Dr. Cowles declared, is allergic to alcohol in the same manner as the hay fever sufferer is allergic to ragweed pollen. When the alcoholic takes a drink an irritation is set up in the covering of his brain. This irritation produces a superabundance of the fluid in the brain, ten to fifteen times the normal amount, and this in turn causes a change in the patient's entire personality.
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> "Few people realize how many persons die every year from alcohol or go into insane asylums, never to come out again, Dr. Cowles said. "The actual mortality is as great, in my belief, if not greater, than from cancer. Accurate statistics are not available. The reason for this is that the disease is regarded as a disgrace and the alcoholic takes on some other symptom, under which his death is recorded."

How easily this may occur was anticipated by William Osler, who early in this century pointed out that nearly fifty-three percent of fatalities from pneumonia occurred among drunkards. The special susceptibility of drinkers to infection was experimentally verified by Dr. Kenneth Pickrell in recent research at Johns Hopkins:

> "If bacteria are aspirated [inhaled] into the lungs during alcoholic intoxication or . . . anesthesia, they will grow uninhibited by the defenses of the body during the entire period of unconsciousness . . . regardless of the amount of immunity possessed by the body. . . . They may easily become so numerous that inflammation developing after recovery of consciousness may be unable to overcome them."

The findings of brain-wave experts reveal that the waves emitted by the brains of drinkers combine the rhythms of sleep and suffocation. The subjects used in these experiments took only enough liquor to slur their speech and make their movements uncertain.

On the psychological side, the reports of medical men are intensely interesting. Joshua Rossett, Columbia professor of neurology, for example, in his book, *The Mechanism of Thought, Imagery and Hallucination,* says of the action of alcohol:

> The highest functions are most affected. The person who takes the alcohol talks more fluently and brilliantly, his wits are sharpened, he has a feeling of strength. If the dose has been large, the stage of exaltation of these or any other functions quickly passes into one of depression, the highest functions being affected first, and the stimulation and depression of function proceed regularly from the highest to the lowest. The action of alcohol thus illustrates the "law of dissolution," which states that functions which have appeared latest in the animal series or individual are the most easy to influence; and so by regular sequence till we arrive at those functions which are first developed, which are the last to be influenced. . . . The power of judgment is abolished very early by alcohol; this is so while the imagination, the emotions, and the power of speech still remain stimulated; but soon the power of imagination goes, the patient loses all command over his emotions, he cries and laughs irregularly, but this soon stops. He next begins to lose control over his speech, talking incoherently and thickly; shortly afterwards he cannot talk at all, but can only make a noise. Muscular movements, which are not so highly developed as those of speech, are next affected. . . .

The cycle of dissolution continues until, finally, "the activity of the reflex centers of the cord is abolished," and control over the most primitive bodily functions is lost. In connection with this progressive loss of control, it is of interest that a survey made of drinking among artists by Dr. Anne Roe disclosed only one painter who claimed to gain stimulation from drinking, and he had given it up. His friends said that for

four years he had painted successfully while constantly drunk, and he himself explained: "I very seldom muffed anything because of drinking. . . . I could draw well when I was tight but I couldn't write out a check. . . . I found it infinitely easier to paint when drunk than I do now." All the other painters held that alcohol is not a good stimulus to creative work and did not use it for that purpose.

A study of a group of 105 heavy drinkers of higher than average intellectual capacity, active in business and professional fields, showed that "superficiality" is "an integral part of alcoholic persons." Dr. Frank Norbury discusses this conclusion in the AMA *Journal.*

> Why are these people superficial? Why, when they "get a thirst," do family, business, social responsibilities sit lightly? Why do entreaties of relatives, partners, friends, do no good? The answer to these questions is well known to physicians. It embraces desire to conform, ambition to be able to drink socially, to be a man among men. All these are adolescent types of reaction indicative of emotional immaturity. . . . The material offered here agrees with the opinion of many that the reason for alcoholism is to be found in the personality of the individual. As Kraines says: "The addiction to alcohol is determined by the internal drive and not by the simple taking of alcohol." . . .
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> Parental attitudes have much to do with personality responses in the offspring. It would be far fetched as well as unfair to blame parents for development of alcoholic tendencies in children after the latter have been away perhaps for years. Nevertheless, in alcoholism and in other psychiatric disorders, notably schizophrenia, Williams' description of "innocent yet dangerous parents" comes to mind with the carryover into adult life of adolescent reactions affecting both parent and child, the latter even when grown up in other ways.

Oddly enough, the most percipient discussion of the psychology of alcoholism we have run across occurs in a volume written long ago—*The Drink Problem in its Medico-Sociological Aspects,* a collection of essays edited by T. N. Kelynack, published by Dutton in 1907. The same facts as those cited by Dr. Rossett to illustrate the "law of dissolution" are described in this book, which goes on to say:

> In what are called the toxic insanities one of the most prominent forms of delusion is that of suspicion, and this is a characteristic of the alcoholic. It makes him quarrel with his friends, because he thinks that there is some concealed and treacherous motive in the background. This . . . feeling of resistance cannot, argues the inebriate, arise in himself, therefore it must be caused by somebody, and who so likely to be obstacles to his well-being as those with whom he is in social contact and who know most of his affairs? These aroused ideas become more complex . . . and thus an entirely fictitious world is created for him, peopled with phantasies which must continue as long as their organic basis lasts. If the lesion is permanent, so must the change in the "Ego" be accentuated, until at last a new self is created, which fails to recognize that it ever was anything else, and which proceeds to harmonize everything with the new state. As the new consciousness is the compelling mind of the moment, any weakening of which he would spurn as losing guard against imagined pitfalls, he does all in his power to strengthen his defenses. Feeling additional aid from the ingestion of alcohol, he continues the indulgence because it is to him an agent without which he loses grasp of his identity. For him it is no poison; it sustains his being and he will have it until overpowered by excess, or stopped from indulgence by forced sequestration. Here again the question of craving is one not so much of indulgence in a pleasurable self-gratification, as of an urgent compulsion to supply a need or a food. The inebriate is not a slave to his habit in the sense that he is cherishing a voluptuous indulgence; on the contrary, his supposed "liking" may be a myth, positively distasteful and abhorred on the sensual side, and only fed because of its necessity for the maintenance of a condition, the falsity of which he is unable to appreciate.

Two further comments by this writer seem worth noting, to the effect that the arousal of both religious and sexual interests in the drinker have a psychological origin: in the latter case, drink stirs memories rather than exerting a physiological influence, while in the former, the victim seeks release from a condition which has become unbearable—that is to say, "Fear is at the bottom of his new convictions."

Finally, there is this conclusion: "Nothing is more certain than that for the highest and truest acts of the will, anything like undue excitability of nerve tissue, and excess of emotional tone, any hurry or impairment of the elements of a volition complex, *viz.*, good memory, power of attention, free passage of thought-currents, etc., will reduce the act from true voluntary action to one of impulse. . . . " Perhaps there are contemporary writers on alcoholism who are as understanding of the problem as this one seems to be, but we have not happened to read them.

From these scattered statements we gather one thing above all: that moralistic condemnation of drinking is useless and worse than useless, in the case of those afflicted by this disease. Habitual drinkers may have weaknesses, but sermons will not overcome them. Nor does "education" of the sort we have been having accomplish very much. So far as we can see, nothing short of a far-reaching revolution in the goals of human activity and in the standards of human achievement can affect this problem very much, if at all. We shall not, therefore, return frequently to this question, regarding as far more "practical" the investigation of better goals than those men now pursue, and of standards which are related to the higher qualities of human beings.