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PAIN is nothing new in the world. The chronicles of history are filled with accounts of human suffering. Great migrations of peoples have often been efforts to escape from conditions where pain was inevitable. But today a new kind of pain has been added to the human lot—the pain of bewildered and frustrated understanding. Whether justifiably or not, men thought they were on the verge of having enough knowledge to understand the world and the place of human beings in it, yet are now confronted by increasing evidence that their knowledge is either false or woefully insufficient. The years which ought to have witnessed the climactic success of Western society are beginning to seem like brief intervals of rising desperation. Not the next triumph, but the next disaster, becomes the content of wondering minds.

So there is the pain felt by men whose intelligence grows ineffectual, whose wealth no longer purchases anything worth having, whose dreams no longer relate to the possibilities disclosed by the stern imperatives of Nature. There is a spreading feeling that we *ought* to know who we are, what the world is about, and what we should be doing, since we know so many other things so well. But in answering these larger questions we uniformly fail. Inevitably, then, an intellectual pain underlain by vague moral guilt pervades the serious men of the times, who feel as though they stand at some great crossroads of history, but where the alternative paths into the future seem both untraveled and unmarked.

It is, we may say, a philosophic pain, and hence may be called a birth pain, signifying the time and necessity for entry into another kind of life.

But philosophic pain is not new, either. What is new is the fact that it seems to be overtaking an entire age and culture, while in the past it sought out only rare individuals, afflicting them with questions in which the world at large had no interest at all. The philosophic quest was once for the lonely few, and those who accepted its austere invitation had lost their taste for other inquiries. They responded by reason of some hidden hunger or longing. What made Socrates resolve to spend his life helping men to undeceive themselves? We do not know. Many of his fellow Athenians thought him ridiculous, and finally a troublesome fellow the city could well do without. It is a curious thing, this—that the world savors the teachings of a Socrates, keeping his ideas alive for thousands of years, yet when a living man practices the Socratic calling his countrymen find ways of isolating him and denying attention to his ideas.

For what it is worth, we have a theory about the present. It is that the circumstances of life, as men have altered and shaped them, are now setting the Socratic questions. What was the purpose of the Socratic questions? The old Athenian hoped to persuade the Greeks to look at their own beliefs, their own first principles, and to see if they were good enough to live by—a painful operation for almost any man. Socrates was a gentle and kindly fellow and he did his best to put his questions in comprehensible terms. Not so the angry circumstances of our lives. All that they say to us is, "It won't work; what you are doing is not the right thing to do." A hurt, humiliated, and mistreated nature speaks to us through the responses of the environment, in the outcries of angry men, and in the revolts of the young. And the voice of nature is not the amiable speech of Socrates, who strove to make his listeners understand. No; the voice of Nature, in speaking to us, is as indifferent to our anxious intelligence as we have been to the world around us during the

centuries in which we harnessed its energies and wasted its riches in the service of our interests and appetites. Nature is now a cold and inflexible instructor. We have perhaps but one advantage in hearing the voice of the environment instead of mild Socratic counsels: our ill-used host now speaks to *everyone,* not just to a handful of would-be philosophers. Ready or not, we must now begin to understand its admonitions or suffer almost immediate consequences for our continuing ignorance.

But while we have no full-scale Socrates to interpret for us, there are a few individuals who have made notable contributions in diagnosing our ills. Consider first what Paul Goodman says in what may be his most important book—*Growing Up Absurd.* The theme of this book is the stupidity and insignificance of the jobs which are available to the young. Very few of them are worthy of a human being's efforts. The basic industries are so interlaced with the dogmas of built-in obsolescence, frenzied sales promotion, and appeals to egotism through artificially created fashions that an intelligent youth finds his stomach turning over when he is invited to give lip service to the rituals of corporate enterprise. No wonder the most intelligent students are refusing to prepare for or go into business!

Where did this insane drive to produce and sell more goods, endlessly, come from? How is it that grown men are able to spend their lives devising childish slogans and jingles in order to "move merchandise"? What systematic suppression of authentic human intentions has been practiced by our culture, so that Western civilization has been able to turn out generation after generation of accepters of this nonsense?

In *Literature and Western Man,* a valuable cultural study as well as a history of literature, J. B. Priestley speaks of the change which came over Western civilization as a result of the industrial revolution and the development of volume printing from a continuous roll of paper. The big expansion of industrialism began a little over a century ago, giving power to a new middle class largely indifferent to thought and literature. As Priestley puts it:

> The relation between writers and this middle class inevitably changes the relation between literature and society. For in spite of some setbacks, and a rising challenge from the new mass of industrial workers, this age, with all that it accomplished in material progress, represents the triumph of the manufacturing and commercial middle class. The world of Victorian and Imperial Britain, of the North after the American Civil War, of the French Second Empire and Third Republic, of the new German Empire, even (though to a lesser extent) of Russia after 1861 and the freeing of the serfs, is the world as this particular class, which has more power and thrust than any other, desires and makes it. The great international exhibitions, from 1851 onwards, reflect the whole glittering triumph of these busy acquisitive people. They control the power-house of all Western society. They shape and colour the social scene. The values that society takes for granted are not their values.

While this passage by no means explains why the populations of England and America so easily submitted to the credo of "these busy acquisitive people," it records the fact of commercial dominance and enables us to understand why the Gross National Product has until very recently been regarded as the principal measure of human achievement. From these psychological foundations, the rape of the planet proceeded as a matter of course. There were, however, other factors, such as the union of scientific technology with industry, which occurred, according to Lynn White, Jr., about 1850, enormously accelerating the destructive course of industrial expansion. And, as Dr. White adds in an epoch-making paper, "With the population explosion, the carcinoma of planless urbanism, the now geological deposits of sewage and garbage, surely no creature other than man has ever managed to foul its nest in such short order." Western man, Dr. White says, has no concern or regard for the earth and its creatures; he merely uses them for his own purposes. He believes that we shall find no remedy for our multiplying planetary ills save by

an essentially religious change in attitude. "We must rethink and refeel our nature and destiny."

Another Socratic apprentice—very nearly a journeyman—is the economist, E. F. Schumacher, whose campaign for intermediate technology is slowly taking hold. Mr. Schumacher's economic gospel has two planks. First, he believes in the simple life, and regards economics as a discipline which should be subordinate to the order and needs of a life guided by moral intelligence. The least possible consumption consistent with decency and health is his idea of the way for human beings to live. His second theme is concerned with how help should be given to the underdeveloped peoples of the world. This is where intermediate technology comes in. Bringing the sophisticated tools and systems of advanced technology to cultures which are not widely industrialized amounts to locking the people of those countries out of the process of natural development. They need instead simple tools—*intermediate* technology—not the complicated devices which are the evolution of a capital-intensive, labor-scarce society. The requirements of the underdeveloped nations are exactly opposite to those of advanced technological societies. Underdeveloped countries, so-called, have plenty of labor, people who need work; they do not need machines which displace men, but well-designed tools that will enable the people to work more efficiently. Only by this means can they become self-reliant, gaining the confidence to develop in their own way. (Mr. Schumacher will have a book published in the United States before long, by Harper & Row.)

Ivan Illich's contentions have much in common with E. F. Schumacher's ideas. Like Schumacher, Illich is interested in the development or provision of tools which strengthen the individual instead of weakening him or making him feel incompetent and dependent. For Illich, the means of education are a kind of tool, and these, too, should be easily available. The purpose of education should be to free the students from external authority, not imprison them low in hierarchical structures where rising to a higher level becomes virtually impossible because of the inaccessibility of the tools of learning, which have been made scarce by high cost and by professionalism. Technology should free and release men, not condemn them to lives of servitude because complicated systems inevitably create inferiority and subordination. Illich's analysis of consumerism and the claims to exclusive knowledge by experts shows that radical political solutions do not touch the real problems of modern man, which result from the dehumanizing effects of the very methods and techniques which are supposed to bring freedom and prosperity to all. Illich argues that the "always more" doctrine of Western industrialism is self-defeating and that in practice it operates to make common folk dependent and unable to plan and live their own lives.

What have these three Goodman, Schumacher, and Illich—in common?

Well, they agree on one thing: the awakening of the potentialities of human beings is the most important thing in life. They would all agree with John Ruskin that "the test of a social system is not what wealth it is producing but what kind of men, what kind of human experience, it is producing." The gross mistakes of our society—the pollution, the wars, the indifference to the young, the old, the sick, the maladjusted—are obvious enough and much written about, but the core ill lies in what man thinks of man. Neither Goodman nor Schumacher nor Illich is willing to license anyone to manipulate other human beings into better conditions. The elements of human improvement are already within each one; what all need is an environment which invites to self-development.

But how does a person reach a conclusion of this sort about man? Why do these three care so much about the integrity and promise of other human beings? Why are they campaigners in behalf of *self*-reconstruction?

If we knew the answer to such questions we should know a great deal. Meanwhile, another question may be of some assistance. Why, for one thing, aren't there more people who have this strong feeling about the inner potentialities and resources of human beings? We admire Socrates for his moral courage and his searching intellect, but we don't pay much attention to the fact that Socrates also stood for the declaration that the true man is a *soul*, and that the soul has its own knowledge and possibilities, needing from others only help in awakening to action. Socrates expounds this in the *Meno* and elsewhere, and the idea of the spiritual reality in the human being comes down to us through Plato from this teaching. We now have it also from the East, but the Platonic idea of the soul has been part of our literature and tradition for more than two thousand years: What *happened* to this idea?

The course of Western history from the decline of classical civilization until the eighteenth century produced one great effect in modern thought: it reversed the meaning and value placed upon the idea of soul. For Socrates and Plato, the soul was the true identity, the being who had need of making his own decisions, of freeing himself from the pressures of opinion and custom and relying on principle for the guidance of his life. But by the eighteenth century, freedom had come to be identified with the doctrines of an aggressive materialism, and the idea of progress and the hope for social justice were closely linked with the tough-minded mechanistic philosophy which had been evolved by Descartes and the later French materialists. These teachings fitted well with the emerging picture of the World-Machine of Isaac Newton, and were quite consistent with the Baconian claim that knowledge and power are the same thing. The idea of the soul, therefore, had no place in the modern scheme. Abandoning it had moreover a moral sanction, as eighteenth-century writers such as La Mettrie and Baron D'Holbach make plain.

There are lucid passages in Theodore Roszak's forthcoming book, *Where the Wasteland Ends* (soon to be published by Doubleday), dealing with the psychological effects of this suppression. One of these, taken from extracts presented as an article in the *San Francisco Fault* for August, is as follows:

> Repression of the religious sensibilities in our culture over the past few centuries has been as much an adjunct of social and economic necessity as any act of class oppression or physical exploitation, it has been as mandatory for urban-industrial development as the accumulation of capital or the inculcation of factory discipline upon the working millions. And it has been achieved with as much ruthlessness. If we have not been accustomed to think of this harsh secularization of consciousness as a political issue, this has been—in part—because the damage suffered has overspilled the obvious class barriers; it has fallen as heavily on the social elite as on the masses, and so has lacked the invidious contrast politics normally requires. Universal evils are less actionable than partisan iniquity, though hardly for that reason less real.
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> Moreover, the secularization of our culture has been attended by a high idealism along its entire course; it has been seen by many of our finest thinkers not only as inevitable, but as a prerequisite of freedom. The major movements for social justice have almost without exception joined in that celebration. Drawing on a legitimate anti-clericalism and a healthy cynicism for promises of pie-in-the-sky, they have been fiercely and proudly secular in their politics. The loss of the transcendent energies in our society has been taken by few of the intellectual and radical leaders of the past two centuries to be a privation as great as any due to physical hardship or the violation of personal dignity. For the most part, it has not been experienced as a loss at all, but as an historical necessity to which enlightened people adapt without protest, perhaps even welcome as a positive gain in maturity.

Actually, the secularists and particularly the mechanistic-minded social thinkers have brought a passionate sectarian ardor to the attack of any sort of transcendental ideas, seeing all these conceptions as soft-headed distractions from the obligations of radical organization and the drive for righteous political power. But Roszak points

out that the inner logic of this sort of scientific social doctrine fitted perfectly with the reductionism of the behaviorists, and gave justification, finally, to manipulative theories of human betterment. Why not, since man is nothing in himself?

Adopting William Blake's demand for a spiritual vision to illuminate reason, Roszak proposes an emancipation from the present-day contempt for man through a renewed awareness of the reality of inner experience. How else can men learn to believe in other men, and in themselves? How else will they be brought to see the *point* of the arguments of men like Goodman, Schumacher, and Illich? Roszak writes:

> We must learn once more to discriminate experientially between realities, telling the greater from the lesser. If there is to be a next politics, it will be a religious politics. Not the religion of the churches—God help us! not the religion of the churches—but religion in the oldest, most universal sense: vision, born of transcendent knowledge.

The mechanistic, single vision of Enlightenment rationalism, once widely regarded as the highway to a New Jerusalem, puts its faith only in massive, self-righteous power and organization. Vietnam and the moon, a very dead place, are some of its recent destinations, while man, and meaning of his individual life, have been lost in the rush to achieve and succeed and to be victorious.

Yet the achievements, the successes, and the victories grow meaningless, or even hideous, in human terms. Thus we have all those unanswered questions—and the salutary, even healthful, continuing pain they produce.

REVIEW
VERY OLD QUESTIONS

CHAIM POTOK'S books—*The Chosen, The Promise,* and now *My Name Is Asher Lev*—have done much to open the understanding of the general reader to the religious feeling and allegiances of the Jews, but this is not the underlying theme of his work. Potok seems to believe that the universal humanism of Renaissance Man—the man of science, art, and literature—is in essential harmony with the highest religious intentions of Judaism, and his stories are about exceptional Jewish youths who struggle toward this broader expression against the restrictions and confining loyalties of the sectarianism which has shaped their minds in childhood. Yet Potok finds much good in all these early influences, showing that he thinks that only the brilliant, the very good, and the strong should dare to leave the guidance of tradition and risk direction from their own genius.

He makes this a well-kept secret on the part of the guardians and transmitters of Hasidic orthodoxy, who are the preservers of the Jewish community which fosters the development of the young men he writes about, and against whom, finally, they reluctantly revolt. Privately—and very guardedly—the best of these teachers encourage the universalism and independent vision of Potok's determined students, but they are careful to protect the others from the dangers of such self-reliance. In *The Chosen,* which is still Potok's best book, one of the two boys who are the protagonists dares to contend in class that a passage in the Talmud is mistranslated. He defends his position, not by citing authorities, but by argument from humanistic principles, and afterward the teacher takes him aside, warning him *never* again to use this method of criticism before other members of the class. It becomes clear that the teacher believes that while *this* boy may have the strength of mind and maturity to enjoy such freedom of mind without losing his balance, the rest would go astray and make fatal mistakes. *The Chosen* is the story of the terrible tests imposed on his son by an austere rabbi father, to be sure that his son is worthy of standing alone.

The Promise continues the story of the two boys into young manhood. Daniel, the son of the rabbi, becomes a graduate student in psychiatry, and Potok now shows that a humanist who seeks fulfillment as a healer and looks for knowledge in all the resources of Western civilization may still have a deep obligation to his ancestral religion. Given the care of a willful and destructive boy, Daniel applies what he has learned from his father's disciplined ways to the patient, and the boy begins to recover. Traditional wisdom and practice, the book seems to say, needs only to be rendered into modern psychiatric language in order to be put to work in the framework of modern science.

Somehow, *The Promise* lacks the inspiration and excitement of *The Chosen. You* read *The Promise* through because you want to kind out what happened to those wonderful boys, but the book seems anticlimactic and contrived. You have the feeling that the boys were supposed to develop into universal, Renaissance men, but the reach of this growth is not felt by the reader.

My Name Is Asher Lev is called by the publishers "a wholly new departure" for Mr. Potok, but this seems to us not true at all. Asher Lev is again a boy of Hasidic parentage who grows up in Brooklyn, and who suffers the pain of conflicting loyalties. Asher's bent is not psychiatric medicine, but art. His father, totally devoted to his job of trying to get Jews out of Stalinist Russia, is unable to take Asher's talent seriously. When Asher is still a boy, a famous artist, Jacob Klein, sees his work and becomes his teacher. Gradually the tensions in Asher's life become manifest, as the demands of the universal feeling in his art conflict with Jewish traditions and the conventional morality. As an artist, Asher sees and paints the drama represented by the Crucifixion. His work is exhibited and his father,

who comes to see the paintings, is horrified that his artist-son should choose to paint in a symbolism which abandons traditional Jewish belief. At the end, the rabbi who is close to the family tells Asher:

> "I believe such gifts come from the Master of the Universe. But they have to be used wisely, Asher. What you have done has caused harm. People are angry. They ask questions, and I have no answer to give them that they will understand. Your naked women were a great difficulty for me, Asher. But this is an impossibility." He was silent for a long moment. I could see his dark eyes in the shadow cast by the brim of his hat. Then he said, "I will ask you not to continue living here, Asher Lev. I will ask you to go away."
>
> I felt a cold trembling inside me.
>
> "You are too close here to people you love. You are hurting them and making them angry. They are good people. They do not understand you. It is not good for you to remain here."
>
> I said nothing.
>
> "Asher."
>
> I looked at him.
>
> "Go to the yeshiva in Paris. You did not grow up there. People will not be so angry in Paris. There are no memories in Paris of Asher Lev."
>
> I was quiet.
>
> "Asher Lev," the Rebbe said softly. "You have crossed a boundary. I cannot help you. You are alone now. I give you my blessings."

It is easy enough to say what is good about such books. They show and in some measure justify and defend the human aspiration for freedom. They illustrate the obstacle course which is raised against expression of the love of freedom by ordinary cultural institutions. They demonstrate the reality of heroic individuals who are equal to the pain and struggle which overcoming those obstacles involves. But they do not—and perhaps a novel cannot—explore the reasons for the complacency and self-righteousness of established sectarian belief. The "certainties" of orthodoxy—any orthodoxy—we are asked to believe, are emphasized and reinforced to protect the weak from their folly, and the self-indulgent from temptation. A rigorous discipline is needed to hold the social community together, and if some narrow, partisan attitudes seem necessary, well, they serve a good end. Who, after all, can survive without the sheltering confinements of tradition? The social community must have regard for the great majority, not for the extraordinary few, the intrepid souls strong enough to make their own rules and to live by them.

These are old, old questions. They emerge in all utopian and community studies and again and again in the history of religion. Why do the defenders and advocates of orthodoxy in religion so seldom take note of the fact that nearly all the men who are regarded as the "founders" of historic religions were themselves reformers who found it necessary to break with the prevailing orthodoxy of their time, as the only means of reaching and then of teaching truth?

For a final note on Chaim Potok's books, it might be suggested that, after reading one or all of them, the reader get from the library Israel Zangwill's *Dreamers of the Ghetto,* to see what has commonly happened to imaginative dissenters at the hands of Jewish orthodoxy.

An even more searching inquiry into these questions grows out of Ivan Karamazov's tortured wonderings in *The Brothers Karamazov,* in the section Pro and Contra. Vasily Rozanov's long essay, *Dostoevsky and the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor,* first published in 1891 and now translated into English by Spencer E. Roberts (Cornell University Press, $9.50), is a study of the great Russian novelist's indictment of Christian orthodoxy, as presented by Ivan in his tale of the return of Christ to sixteenth-century Spain, where, after bringing back to life a dead child, he is imprisoned by the Grand Inquisitor. This old man of ninety, also a cardinal, visits Jesus in the dungeon cell, telling him why he is not welcomed back by "His" Church. Jesus required heroism of his followers, whereas the Church serves the weak

and the self-indulgent—the great majority of souls. The Saviour's precepts were too lofty, impossible for the multitude to follow. More wisely, even more compassionately, the aged Inquisitor claims, the church has simplified the promise of salvation and made possible some content and a little pleasure and happiness on earth for people before they die—instead of the dreadful moral struggle to which Jesus invited them. Rozanov comments:

> We will probably not depart very far from the truth if we say that with the attempt to resort to "earthly bread" in gaining control over the destinies of mankind, there is understood here a terrible, but a really powerful way out of the contradictions of history: namely, the lowering of the psychical level in man. By extinguishing in him all that is vague, disquieting, and tormenting, and by simplifying his nature to the point where it will know only the serenity of short-lived desires, by making him know in moderation, feel in moderation, and desire in moderation—this is the way to satisfy him finally and to set his mind at rest.

The Inquisitor reveals to Christ his conviction that the Saviour's mistake was in not making a compact with the Devil, when he was tempted in the wilderness. Jesus should have accepted all three offers, for the freedom he retained by rejecting them was only for heroes, not common men. And the Inquisitor says to the returned Christ:

> ". . . we are not with You, but with *him*—that is our secret! For a long time now we have not been with You, but with *him*—eight centuries already. Just eight centuries ago, we took from him what You rejected with scorn; that last gift he offered You after showing You all the kingdoms of the earth: we took from him Rome and Caesar's sword . . ."

What Dostoevsky is determined to understand, but cannot, is the *reason* for human suffering. His Ivan can see no excuse for the pain of an innocent child in a universe ruled by a just God. Some "wider good" is claimed, but he finds this incomprehensible. Rozanov develops this problem:

> . . . the fundamental evil of history lies in the incorrect relationship in it between the ends and the means: the human personality, regarded as only a means, is sacrificed in order to raise the edifice of civilization, and, of course, no one can determine to what extent and how much longer this can go on. The lower classes have already been crushed by civilization everywhere, it is now preparing to crush primitive peoples, and there is an idea in the air according to which the present generation can be sacrificed for the good of the future, for an indefinite number of generations to come. Something monstrous is taking place in history; a sort of phantom has seized and perverted it: for the sake of something that no one has ever seen and which everyone is only awaiting, an intolerable wrong is being wrought: human beings—today, as in the past an eternal means—are being sacrificed no longer individually, but in whole masses, in whole nations, in the name of some general, distant goal that has not yet revealed itself to a single living person and about which we can only guess. And where will it all end? When will man as an end-in-himself appear—he for whom so many sacrifices have been made? No one knows.

This was written in 1891—provoked by Dostoevsky's legend of the Grand Inquisitor.

COMMENTARY
A FACTORY SCHOOL

ONE book that should not have gone out of print is Claire Huchet Bishop's *All Things Common.* Soon, perhaps, some publisher will realize this and issue a paperback edition, but meanwhile it can be found in many libraries. This week's "Children" article took us back to the book, renewing our enthusiasm for this remarkable study of the Communities of Work.

Do they still exist? Perhaps not. The vigor of such inspired enterprises seems to need constant replenishing, while the pressures to go off in some other direction are very great. These social inventions are born from deeply felt human need, and often lose their character when the need has been met.

But such needs always return in other guises, so that the achievements of the Communities of Work should not be forgotten.

On her first visit to Boimondau, Claire Bishop arrived after the machines had stopped running—earlier than most factories in France. She asked her guide: "Don't you quit early?" She learned that when enough has been manufactured to supply a decent living, the members used the time gained on production for educating themselves.

> We went through the shops. Men and women sat by the silent machines, and it was as if they were at an extension course for adults in some college. Only they took courses at the factory. They sent out for the best instructors, paid them the regular rate. In one shop I saw engineering drawings on the blackboard; in another they were tackling physics; in another someone was reciting Corneille; in another young men were spelling words and saying such things as "the noun governs the adjective."
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> 'We also have classes in singing, dancing, Marxism, basketball and Christianity. Just now we have a forty-five hour week—thirty-nine in the shops at the machines, six in the shops at the blackboard, or the easel, or the violin, whatever we like. We are paid for it all."
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> "Paid for educating yourselves? And who pays you?"
>
> "The Community. Ourselves."
>
> Such was my introduction to Boimondau. The group of workers who took me around were young men who looked like any other young French manual workers, except for that assured and happy look I have mentioned. . . . As I remarked on the perfection of the watch cases, which even a layman could notice, someone said: "They have to be the very best because here, production is not an aim but a means. Barbu has a slogan for it: "We make watch cases in order to make men."

The story of how this enterprise began and how it matured is well told in *All Things Common.*

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

STORY BY CLAIRE BISHOP

MAINLY because of who wrote it, we got from the library Claire Huchet Bishop's children's story, *All Alone* (Viking, 1953), and read it through. The tale is deliberately utopian, but there's no harm in that. A wonderful social transformation is worked by the benevolent conspiracy of two small boys and a violent storm which isolates them together in a high mountain pasture in the French alps.

At the beginning, Marcel, a ten-year-old who lives in a village near the mountains, is instructed by his father on how to conduct himself during his first summer away from home, caring for the family's three heifers in a meadow high and far away. He is to pay no attention to other boys looking after other cows. Everyone for himself is the rule of the village, for life is hard, and since the small herd is the fortune of Marcel's family there must be no distractions, no friendships to take his attention away from the heifers. The boy's father will bring him a supply of food once a week, and except for this he must learn to remain alone. That is the custom of all the villagers, who struggle to survive and are jealous and suspicious of one another.

So Marcel goes off early one spring morning—he has no dog for company, for a dog might frighten the cows on a dangerous mountain trail—urging the heifers toward the pasture which is six thousand feet above the valley, now rich with the new growth of tender green grass. In the distance he hears the yodelling cry of a school friend, Pierre, who is also setting out with his family's herd that morning, and Marcel cannot help but yodel back, although the boys do not see each other, and Pierre's pasture is not really close to the one which belongs to Marcel's father. Marcel reaches his meadow and in the first couple of weeks adjusts to the loneliness and the cold nights. Then, one afternoon, he sees three strange cows in his pasture! What should he do? From the bells about their necks he deduces that they are Pierre's cows, which have wandered far from their keeper. Pierre, he reasons, must have fallen asleep. Shall he follow his father's advice, and only shoo Pierre's cows away from the pasture, or watch over them until his friend comes looking? If he drives them away they will almost certainly be hurt in the rough, mountain country; so, deeply troubled, Marcel keeps them with his own three cows and later takes all six to drink at a mountain stream. There he meets anxious Pierre, who is at first angry, but when he realizes that Marcel has cared for his cows while he slept, and did not "lure" them away, he is warmly grateful and the boys resolve to be friends and to help one another. No one but Marcel, Pierre says, would have been so kind.

Then comes the storm. Torrents of rain fall from the sky. The stream fills rapidly and the boys herd the cows to higher ground. The rain keeps coming and the stream grows into an irresistible flood which rips away Marcel's path back to his pasture. The boys lead all the cows to Pierre's pasture, and then Marcel decides that he must return to the village, since that is now the only way back to his father's meadow. Naturally, he expects his father to be very angry. But, going down the trail, he finds that Pierre's way home is also torn away by the flood! The boys are locked with their cows on the mountain meadow.

This is nature's part in the benevolent conspiracy, for when the villagers discover that Marcel's meadow has been totally washed away, other considerations pale to nothing and all come armed with digging tools to open the way to Pierre's pasture. After many hours, a path is made and the villagers rush in, Marcel's father with them, but thinking that both his son and the heifers had been killed by the fury of the storm. He is overwhelmed with joy to find his son alive, and after hearing the story of how Marcel happened to be on Pierre's pasture, realizes that only the generosity of his son to Pierre, when his cows strayed, had saved Marcel's life and the heifers, too.

The entire village takes the lesson to heart. The peasants decide to work together, to share responsibility, to work the land in common. They take down their fences to make larger fields that will grow better crops.

But if there had been no storm, no lives saved by unexpecting friendliness, would the tradition-bound peasants have changed their way of life? Probably not. So we have called this tale a utopian story. Yet the device of the storm is wholly acceptable, since *sometimes* people change in their attitudes toward one another without the help of such splendid coincidences. Parents who use this story for their youngsters would do well to read Claire Huchet Bishop's book, *All Things Common* (Harper, 1950), which is about people, a great many of them French, who decided to work together for the common good simply because they had tired of serving their own private interest. Some quiet, "inside" storm converted them, perhaps.

The history of the Communities of Work, told in *All Things Common*, is quite thrilling, well within the grasp of teen-agers and perhaps younger children. It begins with the personal story of Marcel Barbu, a successful watch-case manufacturer who tried to interest his workers in a more constructive, cooperative enterprise than the usual capitalist venture. His employees did not respond, apparently preferring that someone else shoulder the major responsibility for management and production. Barbu decided to find others who would try:

> So he went out in the streets and corralled a barber, a sausage-maker, a waiter, anyone, except specialized industrial workers. He offered to teach them watch-case making, *provided* they would agree to SEARCH with him for a setup in which the "distinction between employer and employee would be abolished."

The group rented a barn and in two months were making watch-cases and selling them. Soon numbering twenty-four, the members of the Community of Work devised a simple statement of ethical principles they all agreed to live by. They lived harmoniously and produced efficiently, and after quotas had been achieved held classes in the shop. In two years the Community was a leader in the industry and gave work to ninety people. Then the occupation by the Nazis came, and since they would not cooperate with the Vichy government, the plant went "underground." Some of the Companions were put in German concentration camps. Barbu was sent to Buchenwald. After the liberation he returned to France (to Valence, where the Community, Boimondau, had been located) and found that his associates had built a new factory which was already in operation. Barbu then decided that the time had come for him to teach others to form similar communities of work.

Learning Together (Prentice-Hall, $7.95) by Elizabeth Monroe Drews is a very personal book, reflecting the author's tastes, interests, and concerns throughout a career in educational activity from the 1930's until the present. Both a professor of education and a clinical psychologist, Dr. Drews has read widely and her work is generously salted with useful quotations and illustrative anecdotes. We liked in particular the following from Ronald Laing:

> . . . what we think is less than we know;
> what we know is less than we love;
> what we love is so much less than what there is.
> And to that precise extent we are so much less than what we are.

Much of the book is given to accounts of exceptional students Dr. Drews has known—students who, because of their remarkable qualities, become reference-points for seeing what is wrong with present-day education. Many readers will be glad to know that Dr. Drews' paper on Fernwood, a Free School, has become a chapter in this book. This part, although brief, is a complete vindication of the title of the present volume, since both the children and the teachers at Fernwood learned a great deal. Perhaps it should be added that the parents of these seventh, eighth, and ninth grade children also learned how much a free school could do for their children, despite the fact that, at first, during the getting-acquainted period, nothing much seemed to be happening. Eventually, the students gained both self-acceptance and competence as, little by little, their own eagerness to learn came to the surface. Fernwood was a memorable experiment and achievement, unfortunately all too brief.

FRONTIERS

Critics and Defenders of Cities

THE story of how Jane Jacobs came to write *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is told by Clark Whelton in an interview and article in the *Village Voice* for July 26. This article would make a splendid introduction to Mrs. Jacobs' book, for Mr. Whelton has caught the spirit of what she did and put it graphically in a few words. Now living in Toronto, where the Jacobs family has moved forseveral reasons—one being the apparent hopelessness of doing much to improve New York—Mrs. Jacobs told the *Village Voice* writer that her attention was first drawn to the ruinous effects of the "cosmetic" approach to city planning by an Episcopal minister and social worker in East Harlem. It became evident to her that there—

> A surge of urban renewal "slum clearance" projects was transforming vital neighborhoods into a socially disruptive patchwork of high-rise apartment buildings, super-markets, and empty, undefined streets which quickly became hunting grounds for muggers and junkies. Although the old tenement blocks were plagued by the complete spectrum of inner city problems, the new construction was making it worse. Neighborhood stores and local businesses were swept away. Old buildings, which offered the only possible means by which the poor might acquire property or commercial space at realistic rents, were being demolished. The renovated neighborhoods *looked* better if you were driving by on the expressway, but the social structures and systems which people require for successful urban living had been stripped away. The renewal areas went downhill faster than ever. Intrigued and concerned by what she had learned in East Harlem, Mrs. Jacobs wrote an article for *Fortune*, called "Downtown Is for People." The Rockefeller Foundation was equally intrigued and offered financial assistance for a book on the subject. Two years later *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was published.

Mrs. Jacobs has many enthusiastic readers, but her ideas have not had much influence on city planners. Why? Since what she says is such plain common sense, you would think that there would be no argument about the importance of her book. However, Jane Jacobs proposes human instead of technological solutions, and her recommendations are therefore out of key with the typical planning approach. As Mr. Whelton says:

> The Jacobs gospel does not require a city to spend a lot of money on new services. It does not require the demolition of a single building or the creation of industrial centers and residential communities. It doesn't even demand the thinning out of population densities with lawns, parks, and playgrounds. All it asks is that city government follow the first rule of good medicine: do nothing to harm the patient. This is such a low-keyed, unpretentious philosophy, hand-stitched and embroidered with self-evident observations (short blocks are better than long blocks for creating social harmony and involvement) and uncomplicated facts (no charts, graphs, or other knowledge substitutes), that it tends to disguise the quietly radical idea that cities are *naturally* good places in which to live and work. To keep them that way, you have to stop murdering them with renewal schemes, civic centers, massive housing projects, expressways, glass tower wastelands, and all the other devices of anti-city thinking which produce impressive post cards and sterile neighborhoods.

"I suppose," Mrs. Jacobs told her interviewer. "there just isn't much money to be made with my ideas." She added: "The people who tear down neighborhoods and then rebuild them are spending a lot of money. There's no financial profit in letting a neighborhood take care of itself."

With her husband, who is a planning architect, Mrs. Jacobs is now fighting for the rights of people to design and live their own lives in Canada, where she thinks there is some chance of winning. The Jacobs probably won't come back to New York. They think Toronto is now the way New York used to be when they enjoyed living there. As Jane Jacobs put it:

> "It's as if we've found the city we used to love. We just had to get out of New York. It's absurd to make your life absurd in response to absurd governments."

Another sort of attack on the problems of great cities is presented in a lecture given by Victor Gruen, architect and city planner, as part of

a symposium program of the Victor Gruen Foundation for Environmental Planning, held last February in Los Angeles. For the past two years, Mr. Gruen has been working on far-reaching changes for the inner city of Vienna, and in this lecture, "The Downfall and Rebirth of City Cores on Both Sides of the Atlantic," he outlines his fundamental conceptions for the revival of urban culture and makes a progress report on the Vienna project. While different in approach from Mrs. Jacobs outlook, Mr. Gruen is concerned with many of the values she stresses, and makes a similar criticism of most planning activities. He quotes from the findings of a recent symposium on environmental design:

> The teaching of design has rested largely in the hands of architects.
>
> A glance at the man-made environment produced by generations of designers trained in this way does not support the view that the system is working.
>
> Architects have failed completely to provide design solutions to environmental problems. (Emilio Ambasz)
>
> The profession is conservative, unsystematic and piecemeal.

Basically, Mr. Gruen's plan for Vienna will exclude the automobile from the central section of the core area of Vienna, convert shopping areas to pedestrian streets, and restore to the city the convivial atmosphere it once enjoyed. There is a great deal more to the restoration of Vienna than this, for in Mr. Gruen's terms a city is a place with "an architectural and historical heritage and cultural, educational, spiritual, and entertainment opportunities." These are the essences of urbanity, which must be fostered and protected. In Gruen's view, cities are today enormously successful quantitatively—never have they been so large—but a disastrous failure in qualitative terms. He does not believe in either the abolition of cities or flight from them, but in restoring their quality. And he thinks that architects, for all their past failures, are best qualified to learn how to "engage in the formidable task of keeping this planet livable for the human species." But they have a lot to learn if they are to avoid "becoming the exterior decorators of a decaying society."

Merely moving to the country is no solution, he says, for these reasons:

> Those who want to settle in the lovely countryside must find out, much to their bewilderment, that once the hundreds of thousands of others who are also filled with the same desire, have settled, there is no countryside left. Where there were trees, there are now the concrete ribbons of roads; where there was pure country air, there is now smog; where there was pastoral quietude, there is now the ear-deafening noise of machines on the ground and in the air. The great dream of suburbia turns out to be a nightmare: it is beset by all the problems which mankind has inflicted on himself by developing technology, and it is devoid of the advantages and creative experiences which an urban environment was once able to offer. Some of us react by running farther and farther away. I found a lovely description in a book by Richard Hedman and Fred Blair, Jr., about the "decentralist planner": "He would solve our problems by spreading them out on the theory that long, thin problems are nicer than short thick ones."
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> Many planners are of the opinion that growth and more growth is the only solution to our problems. The logic behind this idea is obvious: Only more growth will supply the tax money needed to solve the problems of growth. But any attempt to run away from our cities is as futile as an effort to run away from ourselves. The solution does not lie in the dissolution of cities, in spreading mankind all over the surface of our planet and thereby destroying the last vestiges of the biological foundation of human life. It lies in the improvement of the urban environment.

Copies of this lecture may be purchased in pamphlet form from the Victor Gruen Foundation for Environmental Planning, 315 North Beverly Glen Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90024, at $1.25.