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C. E. M. JOAD

Opinions

Religion

Death and the Supernatural

Peoples, Races and Ourselves

The Birth-rate

Education

Broadcasting

Culture

Politics

War, Wickedness and Science

The Post-war World

WESTHOUSE

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1945

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Author's Preface

This is misleading, for I am not the author of OPINIONS. I don't mean merely that Mr. Izant has tacked together the discursive observations with which week by week I enlivened the columns of the SUNDAY DISPATCH with such admirable deftness as to have produced a reasonably palatable omelette out of a heap of broken eggshells. I mean that his materials are in a very literal sense eggshells—not eggs. They were eggs all right, good, addled and indifferent when Friday after Friday I laid them, going of an afternoon to the SUNDAY DISPATCH office and there being confronted with such questions as the fertile brains of an ~~amplified~~ ^{ingenious} staff had been able to contrive for my bedevilment and discomfiture. (Later I got them to tell me over the telephone in the morning what they were going to ask me in the afternoon and sometimes during lunch I thought about the answers. But never, I insist, did I 'get them up,' which explains not only why some of the eggs appear to have proceeded from an addled brain—for, as I have no breakfast, the lunches were sometimes very good lunches—but why those of them which are good seem so often to have been laid by birds of a different feather rather determinedly not flocking together. You see, I ought to have checked what I said one week with what I said another. But I did not. Yet all the eggs are, in fact, mine.) But now, I repeat, they are only eggshells. Physiologists tell us that the substances of our bodies change every seven years. In wartime, what with the general wear and tear to which our bodies are exposed and the odd substances which under the name of food we put into them, the process is speeded up, so that only a small proportion of the atoms of my body are the same as they were when I began to answer questions for the SUNDAY DISPATCH three years or more ago.

But it is from the mind—or so, at least, I like to think—rather than from the material molecules of the body that the substance of this book has proceeded and my mind has during the last five years changed out of all recognition.

I have sometimes maintained over the wireless that the minds of middle-aged and ageing men don't change; that all their owners do, when they think, is to restir the mud of old material. As so often, I was wrong, wrong, as I have proved in my own person.

I can still remember the modestly prevaricating letter I wrote in answer to the proposal that I should undertake this feature. I am, I said in effect, a disgruntled intellectual who disagrees with three-quarters of the British public on every conceivable topic and whose views most of your readers will consider to be silly when they don't think them downright wicked. For example, I have been a pacifist, protesting against all wars on principle and you are very patriotic. (So, dash it, am I, but our patriotisms are not for the same things. I love England with a passionate intensity, but my England is a little England of small country towns and villages, gentle contours and a general haziness of outline and atmosphere; an England where feelings are mild and life and speech are slow; while you are all for speed, progress, size, industry and the Empire. Now I care very little about the Empire and I certainly don't want England to be a 'great power.') I am a Socialist, am, or rather was an agnostic, who cares for books and music, hates jazz, cars and advertisements and wants a smaller population. In fact, my affections centre round the little, near things, bacon, eggs, pipes and pubs and gardens and kisses and the morning paper, and trees and flowers in a bowl and going for walks in the rain—so I think do most men's and nearly all women's. I believe that out of the little things the big things come. I have never understood why the issues of politics turn so rarely upon the little things that touch men's hearts. I don't think, then, that better and better is the same as bigger and bigger. And so on, and so on. . . There seemed to be no end to the things about which we were at loggerheads, with the result that when, in spite of my letter, the paper persevered with the proposal, I did not expect the feature to last for more than a couple of months at the outside.

How the SUNDAY DISPATCH and its readers have stood me all this time I am still unable to understand.

The sagacious ingenuity of the editors has played its part. With what tactful skill Charles Eade steered me away from the questions on which I might have said something too outrageous or too flatly in opposition to their views and the policy of the paper. In fact, my continuance was, I think, due to sheer disinterested tolerance. When it came to the point, the paper really did seem to believe in that free expression of opinions which, as I held, was one of the things for which we were fighting; when it came to the point, it appeared we both agreed that variety of opinion advanced without fear or favour is a healthy expression of the life of a vigorous democracy.

Mainly, though, it was the change in my own views which eased the strain of our divergences. For, when it came to the point, I, too, was as patriotic as the rest. In those early years of the war I came to see that, if ever there was again to be secure living among men, if civilised ways of thinking and behaving were ever to be restored to us, this horrible rule of gangsters and thugs must be overthrown. I realised that a Nazi victory would usher in a new dark age in Europe, an age in which the mind of man would go into prison and his spirit into retreat. Meanwhile, the very thought of the English countryside being overrun by the Nazis filled the soul with a sick dismay. . . .

And so, a pacifist in the last war, in this one I felt only the impulse to rally to our threatened society, and came to desire the destruction of the Nazi régime as ardently as the fire-eating patriots who for years had denounced me as a lily-livered pacifist. In effect, then, while the perilous part of the war lasted our disagreements were comparatively small.

But now the menace against which we have for so long fought has been dispelled and the unity of effort and endeavour which it inspired is breaking up. A common fear wrought us into a solid, cohesive mass; the fear withdrawn, the mass separates into its

original constituents. And so, to come back to the point at which I started, I should not lay these eggs to-day. They are the by-products of my past, not of my present self which is why I prefer to regard them in the light only of shells.

How long the paper will continue to tolerate me in this new mood only it and the stars that guide it can say. It would, however, be ungenerous of me to end without putting on record my sense of the understanding courtesy with which I have invariably been treated; nor can I resist the temptation of making my tribute of surprised admiration for the enterprise which first suggested and the tolerance which later acquiesced in the intellectual high jinks of so unlikely a contributor to the SUNDAY DISPATCH as myself. Frankly, I did not think that the SUNDAY DISPATCH had it in it. As usual I was wrong and I hasten to make such amends as lies in my power, to the paper, and its editor. They have not only my gratitude but my respect.

For my part, I could and cannot deny myself the pleasure of glorying in this opportunity which has been presented to me of getting my views across to a new public, even if I have sometimes made them jump, tweaking their eyebrows and singeing my own beard in the process. At the moment I hope that I may long enjoy the pleasure of waking them up on a Sunday morning.

C. E. M. JOAD.

HAMPSTEAD. JUNE, 1945.

Religion

The birthplace of religion

It is a fact that all the great religions of the world—Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism—came from the East. We in the West are too busy to create or discover a religion for ourselves. We are too busy altering the position of our bodies and other pieces of matter in space—that is to say, we are too busy moving about and doing things. All man's miseries and follies, says Pascal somewhere, derive from his inability to sit quietly alone in a room.

I think that is right. In order to rise above this world of space and time in which our bodies are incarcerated, and to become sensible to another order of reality, we must be still, our senses unstimulated, our emotions dormant, our spirits in repose.

The pool cannot reflect the sky when it is troubled, and in order to commune with God our spirits must be at peace with the world. For God, it will be remembered, speaks 'in a still, small voice,' and in order to hear it we must be still and listen.

Now, broadly speaking, in the West we never are still and never do listen. We are too busy moving and destroying, with instructing and drawing morals and exhorting and boasting, and denouncing

In the East people have been prepared to be quiet, to sit still and to meditate. Why? Maybe, difference of climate; it is too hot to do much. Maybe, difference of diet; they don't eat so much meat and are not incommoded by so many red corpuscles in their blood.

(It may be, and I think it is, an innate difference of temperament. Whatever the reason, the major contribution of India and China to the civilisation of the world has been religious insight.

The need for a religion

All men, I think, have a need of belief, a need which exists none the less because in most of us it goes unrecognised. Nature abhors a vacuum in a spiritual world no less than in the physical, and if the need remains unfulfilled, sooner or later men dress up a man in the guise of a god to replace the God above the skies, whose figure has in our times grown so increasingly dim.

Our age is not the first in which men, deprived of God, have taken some human figure, complete with raincoat and moustache, or a tummy and a row of medals, to worship in the place of God.

I am hinting, then, at a root of Fascism in spiritual frustration. I am anxious—we are all anxious—that a similar development should not take place in this country. Hence the need at this crisis of our fortunes is that men should once again have a living creed which can command their allegiance, supporting an organisation to win their respect. The obvious creed is the Christian religion; the obvious organisation, the Christian Church.

Now, in our time, it is common knowledge that the Church has lost support and respect, particularly among the younger generation.

Consequently, there has grown to maturity a whole generation of men and women without a creed to canalise their aspirations or a code to guide their steps. They adopt what is the only reasonable philosophy in the circumstances, that of 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' A pity, one thinks, if that is their philosophy, that they have not made a better job of the eating and the drinking.

If the Church is to resume its place in the national life it obviously must be brought into touch with the needs of the times.

For this reason I regard the death of Archbishop Temple as a great loss, not only to those who want a better system of society, but for those who care for the reputation of the Church and believe in the efficacy of Christian principles.

We respected and welcomed him because, perhaps more than any

other Churchman, he had shown himself aware of these needs. For example, he, more than any other, was responsible for the findings of the Malvern Conference. What are they? The ones that chiefly stick in my mind were that production should be sometimes for use and not always for profit; that the motive of service should be at least sometimes operative in the community, and not always that of getting; that private property, although it is not in itself undesirable, should not be held in such a way as to hamper the national effort, to impair equality, to give rise to class distinction, and to cause social strife.

The slum parson, wearing himself to the bone with a parish of 20,000 souls and a salary of £300, and the rich incumbent in receipt of £1,500 a year for looking after a country parish of 700 or 800 people, are anomalies which the Archbishop wanted to get rid of.

Grant, then, men's need to believe, grant that religion is the most appropriate channel for that need, and the Church the obvious organisation for directing the waters of man's spirit into that channel, then we must wholeheartedly welcome any attempt to render the Church what it ought to be, but is not—an organisation in which most men and women can find their spiritual resting-place.

The Church and Society to-day

Archbishop Temple was often criticised for the frequency with which he expressed semi-political opinions. But the Church cannot, in my view, keep outside politics. It is the business of Christianity to preach not only the Kingdom of God, but also the Kingdom of God upon earth. As he himself said: 'The Church has not only a right, it has a duty, to declare the principles of true social life.'

Now, nobody in his senses would suppose that these are the principles upon which our society is actually run. As far as I can see, no community has ever conducted its public business for five

minutes on the assumption that Christ meant any of the things that He said, or that any of the things He said were true.

Just think for a moment what a revolution in our practice would be entailed if we took what Christ said seriously. Sacking our judges (Judge not, that ye be not judged); closing our prisons (on the 'vengeance is mine, saith the Lord' basis); disbanding our armies, navies, and air forces (requiting evil not with a contrary evil but with good, not to speak of turning the other cheek); and the re-establishment of our society on a Communist basis, on the assumption that Christ meant what He said when He pointed out that we are members of one another in so intimate a sense that the misery and degradation of one is the misery and degradation of all.

I suspect, too, that we should have to throw in internationalism, since Christ, making no distinction between creeds and races, wanted us so to widen the boundaries of the private family as to include the whole family of mankind.

Well, now, it is pretty obvious, isn't it, that nothing on these lines has, in fact, been done?

Here we have had Christianity in the world for 2,000 years. It has been preached at us from a hundred thousand pulpits in a million sermons—a formidable thought! For 2,000 years we have been told that we ought to be meek, kindly, gentle, considerate, humble, unselfish; that we ought to think of our neighbour more than of ourselves, and of God more than either; that we ought to return evil not with a contrary evil but with good; that we ought to set our thoughts not upon earthly things but upon heavenly things, and much more to the same effect—with what result?

After 2,000 years of the process the behaviour of the crowds of—where shall we say?—modern Manchester is morally indistinguishable from the behaviour of the crowds of ancient Athens before the process started.

In some ways it is a bit better; in some ways it is a bit worse.

This doesn't mean that Christianity has been tried and has failed, but that it has been found difficult and not tried.

The point was put in my hearing once with terrific effect by an orator at the Marble Arch.

The orator was a Christian Evidence Society speaker, and he was being heckled by a seedy-looking individual in the crowd whose point was, broadly, that which I have just been engaged in making. 'Look you,' he said, 'there has been Christianity in the world for 2,000 years and look at the state of the world.' Quick as lightning came the retort: 'Yes, and there has been water in the world for two million years, and look at the state of your neck.' . . .

Clearly, just as one can't blame water because necks are dirty, so you can't blame Christianity because society is wicked. When it comes to the point, we find a hundred and one vested interests opposing our attempts to apply Christianity to make it better. Property, commerce, business, usury, snobbery, and all the rest of them. . . . Why, then, can the preachers of what the Archbishop called 'the principles of true social life'—that is, of a Christian life—not attack these things?

Equally inevitable it is that when the Church does attack them, the Church should be abused and told to keep off politics.

The Church, broadly speaking, is only too ready to listen. I remember once asking the late Archbishop of Canterbury what percentage of the clergy of the Established Church were, in his view, in favour of the recommendations—the very mild recommendations—of the Malvern Conference. He answered: 'About 20 per cent.'

Hence I am suspicious when bishops are told that they should stick to their last. I might ask what is meant by last, but I know only too well what is meant by those who urge this advice upon bishops: concentrate upon the next world, they mean, and don't dare say a word about this one.

Why? Because if, being a Christian, you do concern yourself with it, your concern must take the form of wishing to change it. Incon-

ceivable, isn't it, that a bishop talking about society should advocate a return to the feudal system or to laissez-faire Capitalism?

Now, those who benefit from the present system of society—a system which throws them up into positions of power, wealth, and privilege—naturally resent an examination and exposure of the principles on which that system is based in the light of Christ's teaching. When, therefore, they demand that bishops should stick to their last, what they mean is that bishops should refrain from interfering with the structure of society from which a few benefit and the masses suffer.

And what is the general attitude in this country to-day towards religion and the established Church?

I have just received a copy of *The Christian News Letter*, containing a supplement, *Religion and the People*, compiled from the reports of 1,500 Mass Observers. They have been going about the country, percolating through the Forces, asking people questions with a view to discovering the state of their religious beliefs and practices.

The facts are startling. Only 10 per cent. of the people of this country are actively connected with any Church; 90 per cent. have drifted away from organised religion and have no connection with it. The 90 per cent. are not actively hostile to religion; in fact, four times as many people as are connected with a Church wish to claim some sort of connection with Christianity; another 40 per cent. of the population profess some sort of vague religious belief. Only a fifth deliberately reject religion.

No hostility, then, to religion, though marked indifference to the Church? On the contrary, an approval of Christian ideals, a desire for religion, and a conviction that a man is the better for the possession of a religious faith. In other words, a wistful agnosticism based upon a need which finds no satisfaction in the Churches.

How should the Church regain this lost ground?

Such is the general picture. What, then, assuming that the Churches want to win the people back, are they to do? Some clergymen have suggested that the Churches should adopt the methods of modern publicity advertising. But what are they to advertise?

Something other than religion? They have been trying this for years.

Dances, cinema shows, film stars presiding at Church parties; breakfasts to motorists served in rectory grounds, to be followed by a motor parade and a service for motorists, christenings of children of international footballers with football parades—these are only a few of the devices by means of which Churches have tried to win people back.

The result is indicated by the figures. I conclude that it isn't much good for the Churches to try to provide the sort of things that people can get independently of the Churches.

What else are they to advertise? Religion? But how do you advertise religion? The answer is by practising it. As one of the answerers said: 'I think religion will continue to play a minor part in this country unless the Church suddenly begins to practise Christianity.'

What does this entail? That the Churches should no longer teach dogmas which science has shown to be untrue; that they should no longer concern themselves with doctrinal disputes and matters of ritual and dogma which bore most people; that parsons should speak audibly and in a natural voice; above all, perhaps, that the Churches should visibly stand in social and political life for the principles of Christianity.

Now if you believe, as I do, that our present economic system is based not on Christian principles but on the reverse, practising Christianity will mean standing for a change in the social system.

It will mean that profit should not be the only incentive to effort; that the glaring inequalities of wealth and poverty should be ironed out; that everybody should be given an equally good chance of making good in the world and showing what they have it in them to be.

It will mean, in other words, allying oneself with all the progressive forces in politics that aim at changing our social and economic system. I shouldn't be surprised to learn that Communism is the modern version and repository of Christian doctrine. To stand for all this means, I am afraid, that the Church must cut the cable of the state connection, and cease to be an endowed body which by its nature is obliged to defend whatever the State does.

There is not much hope of change in Christianity I am afraid, while war continues, because a Christian Church is in the hopeless dilemma of being equally unable either to approve or to oppose the war. Hence confusion in the Churches and bewilderment in the people.

And yet nothing tends so effectively to promote belief in God's goodness and presence as a succession of disasters. When disaster has followed disaster in rapid succession, no Christian nation has been known to forswear God and overturn the altars in its Churches. On the contrary, when things go wrong, we invoke God's help to put them right; when they are going right, we think it is not God but only ourselves that we have to thank. The attitude is firstly universal. Take tennis. I notice that when people are playing at their very best, in fact, considerably above what most of their friends would take to be their normal form, they consider that they are playing in their normal form.

But when they play at what everyone else takes to be their usual degree of incompetence, they believe themselves to be the victims of an unprecedented series of misfortunes which are preventing them from doing themselves justice—the light is bad, or the balls are soft, or the balls are dirty, or they did not sleep properly last night, or

their tummies are out of order, or their spectacles are slipping, or their shoes hurt.

In other words, when they are at their best they take their play for granted as being their natural form, and when they are below their best, there must be, they think, some special reason for it. Now let me generalise this. Whenever I am in a good temper, cheerful, alert, full of energy, I consider that I am being myself and I give myself marks for being such a first-class chap. When I am cross, sulky, apathetic or listless, I always insist that there is some special reason which is preventing me from being myself.

Now all this is hopelessly un-Christian. Whereas I and the tennis players believe that the good in us is our natural selves and the evil—the double faults and the bad temper—is due to causes other than ourselves, the Christian must take the opposite view, holding that whatever is good in him comes from God, and whatever is evil, either from the Devil or from his own wickedness, a wickedness arising from his misuse of God's gift of free will.

Here is a typical utterance from St. Catherine of Genoa: 'I clearly recognise how that all that is good in me is from God alone, and that in me, without Divine grace, there is nothing but deficiency.'

Therefore the Christian attitude is to thank God for what little there is in us of good, since it comes from Him, and not to blame Him for the much that there is in us of evil, since it comes from ourselves.

I dare say this is right. In fact, I've little doubt that it is, though I am not good enough a Christian to think like that.

In fact, I am not a good Christian at all. But the Christian doctrine does seem to me to give a logical answer to the question: Why should we thank God for what is good and not, at the same time with A. E. Housman, 'curse whatever brute and blackguard made the world' for what is evil in it. But while the Christian attitude may be good and right for individuals, can we really hold that it is good and right for nations at war?

For what do the successes for which we are asked to thank God mean? That we have been more efficient in organising slaughter than our enemies, that we have, in other words, had an exceptional degree of success in hurting, maiming, or killing our fellow citizens whom God, incidentally, created.

Are we really to thank Him for that at the very moment, perhaps, when the Germans are thanking Him for some other successes elsewhere? Have we the right to put Him in such an embarrassing position by these two strains of gratitude?

Visions in the sky

As for 'visions' in the sky, well, clouds do sometimes assume shapes that look like objects, and even like faces. But I cannot believe that anybody has so designed them to do.

It seems to me a curious conception of the Almighty to suppose that He should go out of His way to remind us of something or to draw our attention to something by drawing pictures in the clouds.

It is the sort of thing a child might do. We do the cause of religion ill-service by thinking of God as designing His intentions and modes of working after the fashion of a man; still greater disservice if we think of Him after the fashion of a child.

And the clerical collar?

By now the reader will have gathered that I am all in favour of the Churches taking an active part in social and political life for the propagation of Christian principles. Yet, despite the fact that so many consider it out of date, I feel that clergymen should still continue to wear their distinctive garb. I think it is a good thing that people should be distinguished in regard to their callings by their

clothing. Here are three reasons—two general and one particular :—

First, there are not to-day enough differences and distinctions in people's appearance. Those of us who are men all look alike, with the result that the world was never so uniform and never so drab.

In the Middle Ages you could tell whether a man was a barber, or a baker, or a butcher, or a clerk, or a jester by the clothes he wore, and though people no doubt smelt a good deal they were as rich to the eye as they were to the nose, and life was the brighter because of it.

Secondly, a great deal of majesty, might, dominion, power, and, may I add, mystery, depends upon a person's clothes. Look at the way we have always dressed up kings, archbishops, lord mayors, and field marshals. Without their clothes they would be nothing.

Read, for example, that wonderful fairy story by Hans Andersen, 'The Emperor's Suit.' I won't tell you the story, but will bid those who read it to dwell upon the extraordinary significance of the little child's remark at the end : 'He's got no clothes on at all.'

Read, too, Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus' on the importance of clothes to a man. If we are to believe Carlyle, the clothes are, in fact, the man.

Thirdly, and here we are come to the clergyman, I regard the clergyman with a certain awe. Yes, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, I do. Clergymen are for me the liaison officers between this world and the next; they witness the great truths that some things exist other than matter, and that some values are important other than money.

In short, they are God's messengers and representatives on earth. Now, messengers, especially coming from so august a source, ought to be respected, and I do respect a clergyman's uniform. I am glad when it is a clergyman who comes into a noisy compartment of brawling people; I am glad to see that it is a clergyman who is walking in front of me down the dark and dangerous street.

On the whole, then, I am glad of clergymen, but if I were to see

one bathing all my awe and respect would disappear. So, let them keep their uniform.

Finally this. No man who is really worth his salt cares a hoot what he wears. He has got something better to think about than clothes. That is why poets, artists, writers, men of genius, are often slovens, finding something outside themselves better worth studying than the appearance of their own persons. Now, nothing saves so much time, trouble, and thought in the matter of clothes as having a ready-made uniform to put on.

Anti-Religious propaganda

Ours is a Christian country with a State-established Church. Should such a country permit anti-religious propaganda, so that people can have the benefit of all the arguments for and against religion?

Yes. In a formal sense, of course, we do allow it. Provided that he avoids indecorous offensiveness a man can say what he likes about religion; he can even write what he likes. But what he does write is read only by a small educated minority.

Thus it is difficult for anti-religious opinions to receive attention and obtain publicity. I think that this is unfair, and the unfairness comes to a head in relation to the B.B.C., which does not permit anti-religious propaganda of any kind. We are never, for example, allowed to discuss religion on the Brains' Trust.

Now either religion is false or it is true. If it is false, clearly the more chance people have of disabusing their minds of an obsolete superstition the better. But suppose it is true; even then people ought to be given the chance of contradicting and disproving it. Indeed, that there should be complete liberty of contradicting and disproving an opinion is the only condition which justifies us in feeling convinced that it is true, for it is only if you allow a generally

accepted view to be questioned and disputed from every point of view that you are entitled to assume it to be right. Indeed, our hold upon opinions that we have never questioned is very precarious. This is true of religion, whose doctrines many people gabble like highly educated parrots, gabble so glibly at times that it is impossible to resist the illusion that they understand them.

I believe that truth like murder will 'out' if it is given a fair field and no favour. Hence if religion is true it has nothing to fear from anti-religious propaganda and criticism.

It is precisely because I believe this that I think that the arguments both for and against religion should be addressed to people through the medium which commands the greatest publicity, namely, the B.B.C.

Religion, in other words, ought to be able to stand on its own feet. It is no good proposing that the L.C.C. or any other local authority should dictate the choice of children—or adults for that matter—by closing cinemas during the hours of Sunday School, Church services, or youth movement meetings.

Sunday schools, Sunday cinemas and Church parades

If the churches cannot be filled with volunteers, they will do no good by using their Sunday schools as press gangs for the forcible enlistment of young children. To make children go to Sunday school is not only not to make them religious, but to turn them against religion when they grow up by a very natural process of reaction from what they were made unwillingly to do when they were helpless kids.

I am appalled to think how many of my generation have been inoculated against God by having God crammed down their throats before they were old enough to receive Him, or to know whether they wanted Him or not. That is one of the reasons why to-day

clergymen preach increasingly to the very young and the very old. The very old naturally suffer from qualms about the next life, as the date of their leaving this one approaches. They feel there might be something in this religious business after all. Anyway they are taking no chances, and going to church is for them an act of prudence, the taking out of an insurance policy as a guarantee against informal risks.

The very young go because they must, and cease to go when they cease to be very young. For my part, if I wanted to give a final knockout to religion in this country, I could think of no better way of doing it than the forcible recruitment of the young for Sunday schools.

As to youth movements, is not the compulsory enrolment of the young in these precisely what we object to in Nazi Germany? It pre-supposes that children belong not to themselves but to the State and that the State is therefore entitled, from their earliest years, to enlist and conscript them for its own purpose, training up a generation of little 'yes-men' to be drilled into obedience and to answer to the cry of the leader.

I believe that a child is one of life's experiments, and has the right of every experiment to develop freely on its own lines, which means that it is not to be fitted into some uniform mould by forcible enrolment in a youth group organised by the State.

The worst of abortionists is he who tries to mould a child's character, dictate its conduct, and determine its growth.

For very similar reasons, I disagree strongly with compulsory church parades in the Forces. Religion is of the spirit, and the spirit bloweth where it listeth, which means, of course, that it cannot be forced.

If you try to force it, you make it recoil like a tightened spring and fill the soul with contempt and hatred for the thing to which it has been forced.

I was put off religion for years largely by having to attend com-

pulsory chapels at school once every morning and twice a day on Sundays. How the thing stank in my nostrils!

Religion, again, is a personal affair between man and his Maker. How, then, can it be regulated by the State or made to serve the commands of an institution—the Army?

Perhaps—most important of all—the greatest misery of Army life for Army men is the constant living in a herd, the total lack of privacy. How rarely are men left to their own devices. How still more rarely are they left alone. See ‘The Way Ahead,’ that best of all war films, now generally released.

Why not leave men free to follow their own devices, to call their souls their own and be alone, if they want to, when Sunday comes?

Just as I don’t think that people should be forced to go to Church, so I don’t think Church-going should be made specially easy for them, as for example by the allocation of special petrol allowances for church-going. After all, people did manage to go to church quite satisfactorily before cars were invented; in fact, I have been told that they went in greater numbers, with greater assiduity, and with greater keenness.

I have yet to learn that the class which in peace-time was under no necessity to walk or bicycle to church—namely, the car class—was ever noted for piety and regularity of worship. I find it difficult to believe, therefore, that the absence of petrol for this purpose will, for them, be a source of great deprivation.

But there is more to it than that. Those who care for their religion have always been ready and eager to make sacrifices for it. Contrariwise, when religion is cheap and easy nobody values it. It has been cheap and easy for too long. It was only when Christians were liable to be sent to the lions that they possessed the resolution and courage to enable them to face the lions. When the necessity disappeared, the conviction and the courage tended to disappear too.

Death, Mediums and the Supernatural

The disposal of the body

Cremation as a method of disposal of the dead was the general practice of the ancient world. But the practice declined in modern Europe, mainly, I suppose, as a result of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Of recent years, however, the practice has been revived. Though the Church as such is not opposed to-day to cremation, there are still many who regard the scattering of the ashes on the moors or waters after cremation as (and I quote the words of a clergyman) "a disgusting act of profanity."

Disgusting? No. Wasteful? Yes, because our bodies, surely, ought to be of some use.

If Christianity is right the spirit is important and the body unimportant—in fact, it is more, it is wicked, the seat of lust, and the source of sin.

And how the body drags the spirit down. Cancer is of the body and so are tumours, microbes, and enlarged prostates, and how they narrow and darken the spirit, so that the horizon of the man who has plucked beauty from the spheres, written sonnets, or ranged the uttermost spaces of the universe contracts in old age to the aches and pains of his failing body. And then comes death, with its merciful release from this body that has darkened the mind with its pains and tied its owner to the earth.

Surely we ought to be glad, regarding the body as a worn-out garment, that we have cast it aside. Why then should we mind what happens to it any more than we mind what happens to a suit of cast-off clothes? And yet, somehow, we cannot rid ourselves of the idea that some flavour of the spirit, which should by now be in Heaven, clings to the body.

We save up large sums of money, which should go to brightening our lives when young and keeping us comfortable in our old age, in order to provide an elaborate funeral by which the body may be honoured.

We incarcerate dear Annie's body in a handsome coffin, cover it with flowers, and follow it to the grave with all the pomp and parade of a funeral, forgetting that what we are honouring is only a lump of decaying meat and that dear Annie is now far away enjoying celestial bliss.

I conclude that it is not disgusting but, wasteful to scatter ashes to the wind. Why should not the dead be useful to the living?

At the end of the last war we pretended to be horrified at the story of the Germans boiling down corpses to make glue. I never could understand why? If we took our religion seriously, we should know that the body from which the spirit has departed is no more than a piece of matter. If we took our patriotism seriously, we should know that a country in an emergency is entitled to make whatever use it pleases of bits of matter.

Patriotism, in fact, should extend beyond death, and a man should hope to be useful to his country after he is dead. We recognise this in regard to the mind, realising that the example of a man's life and the lessons contained in his books may edify and elevate future generations. Why not accept the same principle in regard to his body? Why should the immense fertilising power of the decaying human body be wasted on the gardens and the flowers of the churchyard?

*In a corner of the churchyard,
Where the myrtle boughs entwine,
Grow the roses in their posies
Fertilised by Clementine.*

The well-known verse of the traditional song enshrines an important truth. But why waste bodies on churchyard roses? Dead bodies, in my view, should be reduced by chemical processes to fertilising manures and used to promote the growth of vegetables.

Euthanasia

Believing that we should be allowed to dispose of our bodies after death in a way useful to the community, I also believe that we should be allowed to choose the moment for our death. In other words, I am all in favour of Euthanasia, that is, painless death for those suffering from incurable, painful diseases. Both the Church and the State are opposed to it. So, officially, is the medical profession, though many doctors are honest enough to admit that they practice it already, illegally, of course, for though a Bill was introduced into the House of Lords in 1936 to regularise the practice, it never became law.

But why these objections to euthanasia? I have never been able to see why a man should not be allowed to do what he likes with his own life. It seems to me sheer hypocrisy at a time when all 'civilised' peoples are busy depriving of life young men in their prime who struggle for life and cling desperately to life precisely because it means something to them, that we should deny a man the right painlessly to put an end to his own life when it has ceased to mean anything to him, except a nightmare of pain.

We are, so far as I can see, under no obligation to make the best of life, which is after all a bargain that we never contracted.

All of which makes it only reasonable that we should be allowed to put an end to our lives if, for any reason, they become manifestly not worth living; if, in other words, they are more of a liability than an asset.

Here is a man, let us say, suffering from an incurable disease—cancer, it may be, of the throat. Racked by perpetual pain he longs to die. Not only is he a misery to himself but he is a nuisance to everybody else, taking up, as he must needs do, the time of one or more healthy people to attend to him. He asks nothing better than to be allowed painlessly to die, yet as the law stands, death is a boon which the doctors must officially withhold from him.

In practice doctors are more merciful than the law and do, in fact, insist on relieving the patient's agony, even at the risk of his useless life; which is to say that most cancer patients die of morphia poisoning

Now it seems to me that the accepted attitude in this matter, indefensible at any time, is more than usually hypocritical in war-time.

Never had human life been held so cheap as during the war when men were killing one another in hundreds and thousands.

Yet we are to withhold the boon of easy death from the hopeless sufferers who ask nothing better than to die.

Why, in God's name? Whose business is it, I should like to know, but his? After all, the man never asked for life; he was pitch-forked into it, as we all are, without so much as a 'by your leave.' He did not choose his country, or his family, or the age into which he was to be born. Why then should he be under an obligation to make the best of something for which he never asked, and why, if he finds this something more of a liability than an asset, should he not be entitled to liquidate it?

In the interests of what? Of humanity? Or is it of hypocrisy?

One other point. Our community is fighting for its life. We don't want to carry more passengers than we can help and take the time of able-bodied people to look after them. The passengers are unwilling passengers.

I have never seen a single argument worth two minutes' consideration advanced on the other side of this question, and end as I began, by pointing to the hypocrisy of denying death to those who want it, when a short time ago we were all busily inflicting death upon those who don't.

The death sentence

But though the State will not sanction your taking your own life, it is perfectly prepared to take life itself. Whether we should kill a man for killing another man is an open question. It seems, on the face of it, a little illogical that society should revenge itself upon the criminal by meting out to him because he is a criminal precisely the same treatment as that on account of which it regards him as a criminal. We disapprove, it seems, as a society, of the taking of life; it seems a curious way to show our disapproval by taking it ourselves.

However, let us suppose for the moment (I return to the ethics of the death penalty later) that the right way to treat murderers is to kill them. Then, clearly it is worse not to kill them because they happen to be members of an army. I am thinking now of a case which occurred recently in South Africa of a British soldier condemned to death for murder, but reprieved, according to the South African Minister of Justice, because of South Africa's appreciation of "the great debt we owe to the British Army." To exempt a soldier from the death penalty that would be meted out to him if he were a civilian is worse than absurd, it is dangerous.

The soldier's position is in any event difficult enough. As a soldier in war-time, he isn't only licensed, he is encouraged to do precisely those things which, if he did them as a civilian in peace-time, would be regarded as a most damnable crime. In other words, he is encouraged to take the lives of his fellow human beings.

Killing becomes a duty if it is carried out by the orders of the State. But once you give a man a licence to kill in certain circumstances you make it much more difficult for him not to do the same thing in different circumstances. I am not saying anything so crude as that a soldier gets a taste for blood. I am saying that if you take away all the restraints on civilised conduct in certain connections it is much more difficult to maintain the same restraint in other connections.

Therefore, if I were a judge I should be harder upon the soldier who killed than I would be on the civilian, being doubly apprehensive lest the rot should spread.

Now let us return to the general question of the death penalty.

Although until the war came I had been a pacifist all my life, I never shared the view of many pacifists that human life is sacred.

To my mind it seems a little hypocritical at a time when, in the service of ideals—of liberty, of justice, and of civilisation—we are killing every day hundreds and thousands of our fellow-men for no reason except for the accident of their being born in a different territorial area from our own, to feel squeamish about inflicting death upon a particular individual who threatens the whole structure of order and decency upon which society is based.

When I see a mad dog, I shoot him. If I see a lunatic placing a bomb upon the railway line in the track of an oncoming express, and I have no other way of stopping him, again I shoot him. The murderer, the man who kills for fun, or the man who kills out of private vengeance, so taking the law into his own hands, is like the mad dog, while other types of murderers, for example, the man who murders out of sexual perversion, are analogous to the lunatic. What matters is not so much the fact that these people are killed as that they should be killed after due conviction and judgment of the law by the representatives of the law.

Speaking for my own part, I do not think that death is an evil, it may, as Socrates argued, even be a good. We simply do not know what being dead is like; it is just as likely to be better than being alive as it is to be worse—and, for my own part, I do not believe that I fear it. (Of course, when it came to the point I might find that I feared it very much.) What I fear, and what most sensible men fear, is not death but pain. It seems to me that the worst thing in the world is pain, physical pain above all, and next to that mental pain, the pain of boredom, of monotony, of the deprivation of freedom, of long-drawn-out days and months and years within

four walls, deprived of the society of one's kind, the freedom to wander abroad where one will, and the sights and sounds of nature—in fact, the pain of imprisonment for life. If I had my choice I would opt for execution instead. Hence, it is not so much capital punishment as life-long imprisonment that seems to me to be the horror that requires defence; and it is a curious fact that our society, which holds life so cheap, makes so much fuss about the momentary pain of the first and so little about the life-long torture of the second. The merciful Home Secretary sometimes commutes a death sentence to imprisonment; he never in his mercy commutes life-long imprisonment to the death sentence.

Political assassination

But granted that the community may justifiably inflict death upon a particular individual, what of the individual acting in what he conceives to be the best interests of the community, who takes the law into his own hands? In other words, is political assassination, such an assassination for example, as that of Heydrich, the butcher of Czechoslovakia, ever justified?

It is a difficult question, to which I don't profess to know the answer. May I, therefore, split a hair and to make a distinction between what it is right should be done in a community and what it is right for you or me personally to do?

When I ask myself the question, what is it that is right to be done in a community, I give, I think, the answer of the utilitarians, 'that is right which promotes the happiness of men and women.' As Bentham put it, 'We should judge every action as good or bad in proportion as it augments, or diminishes, the happiness of the party' (or parties) 'whose interest is in question.'

Now by that standard it seems to me right that Heydrich should be eliminated. The Nazi leaders are monsters of ruthlessness and

cruelty and, I do not for a moment doubt that to extinguish them would be for the happiness of men and women.

You may say that any statesman who declares war is also responsible for the mass misery of mankind. Yet I think there is a distinction here. Mr. Chamberlain declared war in *spite* of the misery which it would cause. Himmler and Heydrich murdered and imprisoned and starved and tortured precisely because of the misery these things caused, using fear and pain as deliberate instruments of policy.

But although it may be right that such men should be killed, I hesitate to say that it is ever right that you or I should kill them—ever right, that is to say, that anybody should be an assassin. There are two reasons for my hesitation. One is grounded in morals. ‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay,’ and, also, ‘Judge not that ye be not judged.’

The second objection is that one cannot, even in an age of violence such as this, give a charter to every individual to commit violence and murder as and when it may see to him fitting to do so, being both judge and jury in his own cause as to when it *is* fitting. That way gangsterdom lies and anarchy. The punishment of oppressors is the job of the law.

In Czechoslovakia during the German occupation, there was no law except such as the Germans administered. And so I suppose that the nearest thing to law was the armed force of an oppressed people rising against their oppressors. When victory had been won, it might be right that the outraged sense of justice of the victorious nations should put such men as Himmler and Heydrich against a wall and shoot them. That would be the justice of an outraged humanity and not the vendetta of an oppressed and possibly vindictive individual. But should we have waited for victory before eliminating such men? It is just at this point that I confess the questions of morals involved are beyond me.

Ghosts

The discussion of the right of the State or the individual to inflict the death penalty has led me astray from the main theme of this chapter. I return to it with the ever-recurring topic of ghosts.

First let me make it quite clear that I don't believe that either ghosts proper, whatever they may be, or the events that happen in séance rooms have any bearing upon the question which most concerns mankind, namely, that of our continued existence after bodily death. That they should do so seems to me so inherently improbable.

Having had a good deal of experience of physical phenomena at different times, I am convinced that events do from time to time occur whose causation is unknown to us. For example, I have seen a handkerchief lift itself up off a table and tie itself into knots in the air.

Again I am quite prepared to believe that influences emanate from places, that there is something, which for want of a better term, one can only call 'the spirit of the place.'

It is impossible to go, as I have done, to a richly and variously haunted place, for example, Borley Rectory, and not believe that there is something about the place whose nature and workings we cannot understand, but whose presence we are forced to accept.

Borley Rectory is described in an admirable book by Harry Price, 'The Most Haunted House in England.' A gloomy rectory, tucked away in a remote part of Suffolk, it has for years been a centre of ghostly legend. A nun is seen walking in the garden, a phantom coach is heard driving along the road, a gluey substance is mysteriously found on the floor of the rectory chapel, half a fireplace appears on the rectory stairs, candlesticks are thrown down the stair well when there is nobody on the top floor, raps are heard, bells are rung without visible agency, steps are heard to walk along the passage without visible feet. The rector's wife is punched between the eyes by an invisible fist, the sounds of heavy bodies or sacks being

dragged across upper floors make ceilings rock. When the house is empty mysterious messages and writings appear on the wall, and, finally, the place is burnt down in mysterious circumstances.

At one time an organisation with which I was connected hired the rectory for six months in order to watch out for phenomena. At that time mysterious pencilled squiggles were being found on the walls. (Do ghosts, I wonder, materialise lead pencils?). I went there one evening, the only other person in the place being one of the observers who was camping out there in a sparsely furnished room on the ground floor. When I arrived, he took me round the house and carefully pointed out all these squiggles—some were simple messages, even prayers—which he had ringed round with a blue pencil.

We went into the camping-out room for supper, he going first and I following him; cooked a couple of sausages on a primus stove and had some tea. After about half an hour I went out again, and there on the wall immediately facing the door was another squiggle which I feel certain had not been there when I went into the room.

Let me emphasise the fact that there was nobody in the house and, as it was completely empty, it would have been impossible for anybody to have got in without making sounds sufficient to be heard. I don't expect you to believe this, but I do expect you to believe that one after another every Rector of Borley was sooner or later obliged to leave because of the annoyance caused by the hauntings, because the children couldn't sleep, because the servants wouldn't stay, because the windows and crockery were continually being broken. Are we to suppose that five separate families put themselves to the inconvenience and expense of changing their residence merely because of the figments which their imaginations had invented to annoy them?

Do you want a theory? Here is a possible one. The human personality is not simple, it is composed of two elements, or rather it is formed as the result of the combination of two elements, a body and

something which for want of a better name I will call the 'psychic factor,' this latter being a current of raw, undifferentiated life. Death comes and the combination is broken up. We know what happens to the body – it turns into worms, but we don't know what happens to the psychic factor. It may still continue to exist and retain its power to combine with a body to make a personality.

We can expand this notion and think of the psychic factor combining not only with bodies but with sheets, with dust, with clothes, and so producing apparitions, known as ghosts.

But here, you see, I am entering the realm of the wildest conjecture, and only trying to cover the fact that although I believe there is something in the innumerable stories of ghosts, I don't really know what that something is. But there can't have been so much smoke blowing so persistently down the ages without a little fire.

Séances and mediums

My personal experience of test séances with mediums confirms me in this view that there is 'something in it,' but what it is I don't know. I wish I did, but if I did, the world would be for me a less interesting place than I still find it.

I have had a good deal of experience one way or another with mediums in connection with a body called the University of London Council for Psychical Investigation. Because we were an academic body mediums showed a willingness – indeed, at times an anxiety – to appear before us. If we could give them a certificate affirming their genuineness, up went their earning powers, and quite a number of mediums submitted themselves to our tests.

The tests were severe, being, in fact, suggested, many of them, by members of the Magic Circle (the association of professional conjurers). For example, we would dress mediums up in armour, put boxing gloves on their hands, strip them naked and sew them up in

sacks, and then say to them in effect, 'Now do your stuff.' It is surprising—or perhaps it isn't—how little stuff was done in the circumstances.

I carry away three general reflections from the varied assortment of experiences which I enjoyed. First, how ingenious the human being is in the pursuit of fraud and gain. There were mediums with secondary stomachs, like cows. They would swallow something before the seance — it might be butter muslin or cheese cloth — bring it up during the seance behind the curtain under the protection of which they went into their trance, and then produce it from their mouths under the name of ectoplasm. There were mediums who secreted metal substances in various parts of their anatomy.

Secondly, the fathomless extent of human credulity. I remember that a witness in the recent Duncan case described how Mrs. Duncan had been convicted and fined at Edinburgh in 1933 for pretending to be a medium, and presumably, therefore, obtaining money on false pretences. Yet ten years later she again imposed herself on the public at Portsmouth.

Natural credulity is heightened by two circumstances. The first, the pressure of our wishes. We so long to believe that those whom we have known and loved have not passed utterly into nothingness; it may be that vanity forbids us to contemplate the extinction of *our own* personalities with equanimity. Now, wishes father thoughts, although they don't breed evidence; but they make us extremely receptive to so-called evidence which, if our attitude was purely dispassionate, we should not consider for a moment.

Secondly, seances at which nothing happens are so boring. There you sit for a couple of hours in the dark. The spirits are said to like a cheerful noise, and so you are encouraged to talk. And when your conversation gives out, as mine pretty soon does, you begin to recite, and when you can't think of any more poetry to recite they put a record on the gramophone, a record of some awful crooner—the taste of the spirits over there or the guides is deplorable—which is

played over and over again, and, after a couple of hours of this, you are prepared to accept almost anything.

And then—my third consideration—that there is something in it, after all. Of over a hundred occurrences, ninety-nine are chaff, but one is wheat. And that one—how odd it is. Take, for example, an unsensational one. If you have four or five people sitting in a darkened room for two or three hours you would expect the temperature to go up. Well, we used to have a thermograph carefully sealed so that it could not be interfered with, to register the temperature during the seances. It showed almost invariably that the temperature *went down*, and the lowest degree registered coincided with the greatest intensity of happenings.

What does it mean? I don't know. Waste-paper baskets fly through the air, curtains belly out into the room, tables jump, musical instruments play . . . And therefore? And therefore the human soul is immortal and survives bodily death? Obviously not. It simply doesn't follow. Therefore merely something happens, the causation of which we don't understand. For my part I would not like to go further than that.

Reading the future

But I have no belief at all in any of the many seers who claim to be able to foretell the future either by 'fire reading,' palm reading, studying the stars, or similar methods. That anyone should be able to see the future in the fire or the stars seems to me in the highest degree unlikely, if only because I find it impossible to believe that the future exists. If the future exists it must exist now; if it exists now, it is not the future, but the present.

Hence, when people pretend to foretell the future one of two things is happening. Either they are making judgments of probability, like the clairvoyante in the booth at the fair who tells a pretty

young girl that within a fortnight's time a dark stranger will cross her path, or they are simply chancing their arm.

If you shoot enough arrows into the air one of them sooner or later is bound to hit a target. Now, when people foretell the future, the 99 boss shots that they make are forgotten, and the one that happens to hit the mark is remembered.

Hypnotism

Hypnotism I can neither deny or explain. I don't think anybody can, but it is helpful to proceed on the assumption that part of ourselves is unconscious. Such a lot of nonsense is, however, talked about the unconscious that I must try to say rather more exactly what it is that I mean by it.

Take this experiment which was carried out recently in London. The hands of 20 people were photographed. Practically nobody has ever seen their hands in the flesh from the same point of view as that from which they appear in a photograph; never seen them, that is to say, with the fingertips pointing to one's face.

The 20 people were then shown the photographs of the 20 pairs of hands, and asked to pick out their own. Only one spotted his own.

They were then asked to write something about the pairs of hands, to write anything they pleased, *e.g.*, as to the indications of character or temperament which they saw in the hands, deductions as to the occupation of the owner, and so on. Without exception everybody wrote two or three times as much about his own pair of hands as he did about anybody else's. His own pair of hands, which, mark you, he had not consciously recognised. Unconscious recognition? I think we must say that it was that.

Now the unconscious part of ourselves which did the recognising is normally inaccessible. But it comes to the surface when we are asleep and is responsible for our dreams. Hypnotism is a device for

artificially putting the conscious self to sleep, with the result that the unconscious self becomes accessible and may take control of our bodies.

The general method is to ask the person who is to be hypnotised to lie in an armchair or couch, make himself comfortable, and relax. He is told he is going to feel restful and sleepy, and that he should think of some distant and pleasant scene. For a short time, a minute or so, he is asked to gaze steadily at some small object held a foot or so from his forehead.

Mr. Victor Ahlheim, whose recent demonstrations in Belfast of mass hypnotism aroused much interest, used a watch as an object of contemplation. Presently the subject is told that his eyes are closing, and, by this time he is glad to be relieved of the slightly fatiguing strain of concentration. His eyes do actually close. The hypnotist continues to talk to him quietly and firmly, encouraging him to complete rest and relaxation. He may reinforce the effect by passes, i.e., stroking the patient's limbs gently from time to time. When the patient is asleep the unconscious is both accessible and in control.

Now the most valuable function of hypnotism is to make such suggestions to the unconscious as will enable one to get rid of bad habits. For example, you suggest to the confirmed drunkard who is under hypnotism that he will hate every drink that he tastes during the next few days. He wakes up and duly hates them.

Or the method is useful in the case of pain. For instance, a man is subject to attacks of gout, or to epileptic fits. You hypnotise him and suggest to his unconscious that when the time for the next attack or the next fit is due nothing whatever will happen to him—and, if you and he are lucky, it doesn't.

It is interesting to notice that when you wake up and perform an action which has been suggested to your unconscious while you were under hypnotism your conscious thinks it necessary to find a good honest reason for doing it.

Thus if I hypnotised you and suggested that six hours later you

will open your umbrella in your sitting-room, you will do it, inventing at the same time the reason that you wanted to see whether your umbrella was all right before you used it again in the rain.

All this is familiar, but the interesting thing about the Ahlheim case is that so many people were hypnotised at once. Mass hypnotism has often been invoked to explain supernatural phenomena. When five of us see a ghost together, it is, we are told, because we have all been hypnotised into thinking we have seen it when there is nothing there.

Personally I have always been sceptical about mass hypnotism, mainly because I have never come across an example of it. (For that matter I have never in my own person been hypnotised at all. Half a dozen hypnotists have tried their hands, or rather their eyes, on me—once for a wager—without any success at all. Indeed, I won the wager.) But there doesn't seem to be any doubt about the Belfast case.

All this, however, is pure speculation; we simply don't know enough either about the unconscious or about hypnotism to say how, why, or in what conditions hypnotism will occur. The hypnotic power must still be classed as a mysterious gift possessed by some person, though conceivably able to be cultivated by all of us whose powers, especially in the direction of healing, are still largely unexplored.

Peoples, Races and Ourselves

The East and the West

'Oh, East is East, and West is West,' says Kipling, 'and never the twain shall meet.' But the twain are meeting to-day on the common ground of American civilisation. And the question is what effect is this process of drawing closer to one another likely to have on the future relations of Eastern and Western civilisations. Will it enable the East to work in greater harmony with the West?

The answer is 'No.' It isn't thinking alike that is the best recipe for working in harmony, but not thinking alike. If you think alike, you will have the same scale of values. For example, the nations of Europe value money, prestige, and power. Money, prestige, and power, as Plato pointed out, are dividing and limited goods, in the sense that if I have them you don't; if Germany has them, England doesn't, as compared with wisdom and beauty and virtue, which are not limited and not, therefore, dividing.

When Japan was removed from, and uncontaminated by, Western civilisation she was not a menace to any Western power. When she came to think like us, desiring the things that we desire—money, power, and military glory—taking over from us, incidentally, all our vices and none of our virtues, she came immediately to loggerheads with the West.

If people and nations think alike, if, that is to say, they desire the same things and live according to the same scale of values, it is extremely unlikely that they will work in unison. Most of us, I

think, are unable to imagine any goods as valuable save money, power, and position. Take, for example, the story of the American who after an interview with the Pope was asked for his opinion, and answered: 'Waal, it's a bully position, but I don't quite see where it's going to get him.' The American did not realise that there were desirable things in the world besides money, power, and position. But there have been people who did. The Indians have done so, the Chinese have done so—may still do so, for all I know—and the Tibetans quite certainly do so still. Hence Tibetans don't compete with us, and if necessary, therefore, could work in unison with us. So could the Eskimos, so could the South Sea Islanders, precisely because the goods which they value are not those which we value; precisely, in other words, because they don't think alike with us.

Chinese and Japanese

We talk of the East as if it were one, but its races and cultures are very different. For example, the Chinese and Japanese though geographical neighbours have developed widely different outlooks on life.

The Marxists would account for this difference in terms of economic circumstances or industrial development, believing, as they do, that the mental and spiritual characteristics of a people are determined by the framework of economic circumstance in which they live. Not being a Marxist, I can't go all the way with this view. I think ideas count in the lives of peoples, and I think that there are different innate characteristics due to climate, history, act of God, or what you will, which distinguish the peoples of different nations.

The Chinese have the oldest civilisation in the world. Their great philosophers, Confucius and Lao Tse, were prescribing to them a code of ethics and a set of beliefs five or six hundred years before

Christ. Theirs is the oldest culture, and their philosophy and their culture have pervaded the outlook of the whole people more successfully than any other culture.

Now look at the Japanese. Consider what an extraordinary history theirs has been; how, up till the middle of the nineteenth century, they lived cut off from the rest of the world, having no contact with foreigners. When the Americans first came there, under Townsend Harris in 1856, they found what was, in effect, a completely feudal state of society with the Samurai fulfilling the rôle of feudal barons. Now the Japanese are the most imitative of races. In the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., they took their philosophy and culture from China. When contact was made with the West in the middle of the 19th century they proceeded to imitate the civilisation of the West. Unfortunately, they took from us all our vices and none of our virtues; our belief in force, our power politics, our scientific ingenuity, uncombined with wisdom; but not our democracy, our tolerance, or our respect for the human individual.

What has, in effect, happened is that science has showered gifts fit for the gods upon savages who are using them to destroy the civilisation, including the civilisation of China, on which they were once nurtured. All of which shows the danger of giving men improved powers without giving them improved wisdom.

Gandhi

To realise something of the complexity of the East, you have only to consider the case of Gandhi.

There are two sides to one's opinion about Gandhi, just as there are two sides to Gandhi. On the one hand there is Gandhi the great man—I should say, one of the five greatest men in the world to-day. If you met him, as I did once for a short while, you feel that you are in the presence of greatness. He is still with a stillness

which is a positive thing, and silent with a silence that speaks. Then there is the respect that he wins from his adversaries. He has been in sharp conflict with most of those of our race who have ruled India for the past 20 years, yet they all feel respect for him. When he proposes to go on hunger strike in protest against not getting his way, they don't smile derisively as if it were a mere blackmailing stunt, yet if it were anybody else but Gandhi the smiles of derision would be inevitable. Again, he has caught the imagination of some 300,000,000 of his fellow countrymen as has no other man in the contemporary world. Caught it—and held it. I do not remember how many years Gandhi has been a leader, but he has retained leadership for a longer period than any of the other leaders of great nations to-day.

As to his doctrines, it must be remembered that the form of passive resistance which he advocates has never yet been tried on a large scale. If it were tried on a large scale we do not know that it might not succeed. This is not the place to discuss it, but two points seem to me to be clear. First, that if it *did* succeed, if violence were for once conquered not by a greater violence but by its opposite, non-violence, the victory would be the greatest single step in the history of mankind. Secondly, it seems to me, in view of the explicit utterances by Christ on the subject, that this is the doctrine that Christians are enjoined to practise.

Here then is one side of Gandhi, the great man who is also a saint. But there is another side to him. A lawyer is tacked on to the saint: in fact, somebody who knows him well once said to me he is one-third saint, one-third lawyer, and one-third humbug. 'What do you mean by "humbug"?' I asked. 'The same as I mean by politician?' 'That is about it,' he answered. What is the reason for this estimate? One is that Gandhi seems to be incapable, so journalists who have interviewed him have told me, of giving a straight answer to a straight question. He dodges the answer. Suppose one put to him the straight question, 'Do you want the Japs in India or don't you?'

I am told that no direct answer would be forthcoming, but a long and involved speech whose meaning it would be extraordinarily difficult to determine. When the interviewing journalist tries to put the conclusion of the speech into plain English, 'You are saying then, Mahatma . . .' he says, and proceeds to summarise what he takes to be the conclusion, Gandhi turns round and replies, 'Oh, no, that is not what I meant at all.' All this suggests the lawyer in the worst sense of the word 'lawyer,' who uses speech not to express but to conceal his real intentions.

If Gandhi does in fact do this, my guess is that he does not do it as a conscious humbug; probably he takes in himself as much as, perhaps more than, he takes in anybody else. It was said once of Mr. Gladstone that while he was like all other politicians in having a card up his sleeve, he was alone in thinking that the Almighty had put it there. The same, I gather, might be said about Gandhi. Consequently, when he behaves like other politicians, that is to say, no better and no worse, we feel a greater sense of discomfort because we automatically judge him by a higher standard than we apply to others. The days of silence, the fasts, the aroma of sanctity with which he is surrounded, only serve to throw into higher relief what appear to be the turns and twists of the ordinary politicians.

And here a new thought suggests itself. If Gandhi is the prince of prophets he is nevertheless one whose influence is destroyed if his prophecy come true. He is the most successful agitator of our times, yet even if his teachings were to succeed and he were to become India's first Prime Minister, he might go down to history as the greatest failure of our times. It is conceivable that in his heart he knows this, and that that knowledge is the reason why, a master of negation, of obstruction, and of protest, he seems to shrink from the risks of responsibility and the duties of power. I imagine that he would get short shrift from the Japanese, and I cannot for a moment believe, much as he may dislike us, that he wants to substitute the Japs for the English. I also imagine that nothing would induce him to make even such a grudging avowal.

The colour bar

Gandhi, you may remember, first achieved prominence as a young lawyer, who defended the interests of the Indian colony in South Africa against the attacks of the white settlers, attacks mainly animated by the evil colour bar prevailing in that country then and now.

Here is a story which illustrates what I feel about the colour bar.

A Scots crofter had to go to the kirk one Sunday morning in the depths of winter; he went alone because his wife had a chill. For two hours he listened to a thunderous sermon denouncing every conceivable kind of wrongdoing, painting sin in the most hideous colours and threatening the sinners with the most appalling tortures in hell. When the crofter got back his wife asked him what the sermon was about. 'Twas about sin,' said he. 'And what did the minister say about sin?' asked the wife. The crofter thought for a long while, scratched his head, spat, and then—'He was agin' it,' he said.

Well, that is what I feel about the Colour Bar. Must I really at this time of day think of all the arguments in favour of being agin' it; that it is contrary to the protestations of the Atlantic Charter, that it makes a mockery of freedom—a man ought to be free to take any job for which he is fitted, or go to any hotel or restaurant for which he can pay, whatever his colour—and of equality—a man should not be given an unequal chance in life or treated unequally by the law simply because of his colour—and of our religion, which insists that we are all immortal souls and equal in the eyes of God, and that it reduces to a farce many of the aims for which we were alleged to be fighting.

The dogma of racial superiority! I had always thought it was the Nazis who maintained it. I have heard people point out that there are various degrees of 'coloured,' that the yellows are not as 'coloured' as the browns, and the browns as the blacks. This presup-

poses that white pigmentation, or rather pink pigmentation, is the standard of humanity, the norm, and that all departures from it are departures in the direction of lesser and lesser degrees of humanity. The white man on this view is at the top of the human scale, and the man whose pigmentation is the farthest removed from white, presumably the Negro, is at the bottom. I can see no grounds for these beliefs. Most human beings who have ever lived are yellow; the next largest group is black or brown; the so-called whites are in a small minority. Even if they were true I can see in them no ground for the segregation or isolation of coloured people.

'They have different habits, different manners, different desires.' I doubt it, and even if they have why should they be segregated? I notice, by the way, that all the demands for isolation and segregation are made by the whites against the coloured; the coloured never demand that the whites should be segregated from them, which seems to be evidence of the greater humanity, kindness, and sense of equality of the coloured.

'They are a lower type and have lower intelligence.' Have they? Is it the coloured men who lynch whites, or the whites who lynch the coloured? Are the guards in Nazi concentration camps who whip a man every day until he dies white or coloured? Are the S.S. men who have murdered three million Jews in Eastern Europe and Poland white or coloured? Was the Inquisition an invention of the whites or the coloured? Have the coloured people committed against their fellow men any crime comparable to what whites commit against whites, and whites against coloured?

'They smell.' Perhaps, perhaps not. Have we ever asked ourselves whether they think that we smell?

I have been trying, you see, to think of arguments in favour of the Colour Bar, and can find no good ones. Even if it could be shown that coloured people were morally baser, intellectually inferior and physically repulsive—and I don't think it can—the demonstration would not really bear upon the point under discussion.

Two questions surely are involved. First, are they the equals in intelligence and civilisation of the whites?; secondly, ought society to treat them *as if* they were equally important with the whites? It seems to me that even if the answer to the first question is No, nevertheless the theory of democracy requires that we should answer the second question with a Yes, because just as the teaching of religion claims us to be all equal in the sight of God, so democracy proclaims that all citizens should count as equal from the point of view of the State; they ought all to be entitled to food, to the protection of the law, to justice, to a job at a fair wage, to provision when they fall out of a job or fall sick, and to decent and tolerant treatment from their fellow citizens. It seems to me precisely for these things that the war is being fought.

And now that I have said all that, I realise that I have not touched the nerve of the case, for the nerve of the case lies beyond argument, lies in fact in prejudice and fear. The fact that I can think of no arguments for the Colour Bar does not mean that it won't continue to be passionately upheld by those whose prejudices are aroused and fears evoked on the presence of races differently pigmented from themselves. In fact I could argue until I was as black in the face as those whose case I am trying to uphold, and it would not make the slightest difference to anybody.

The English—what we think of ourselves

Just as we think white people superior to coloured, so do we all feel convinced in our hearts that we, the English, are the greatest people on earth.

The English as a nation have always been given to self-praise—a puzzle that should be, because individually we boast, perhaps, less than most human beings, are taught the art of self-deprecation—'I did not play so badly,' I say after I have won the finals at Wim-

bledon—and have what we call ‘side’ deliberately and painfully knocked out of us at our public schools. But as a nation we boast abominably. This raises another question which always puzzles me. Why is it that while human beings individually are neither good nor bad but mixed beings, when organised collectively in States are almost uniformly bad?

There was published some years ago a book by an enterprising Dutchman called Renier entitled ‘The English, Are They Human?’ One of the chapters in this book is headed ‘The Best In The World,’ and it contains a series of passages taken from contemporary English newspapers over a period of four or five months, which proclaim that every conceivable aspect of the English mind, the English spirit, the English body, the English landscape, the English town, is, according to our own account of ourselves, ‘the best in the world.’

Here are a few examples taken at random.

‘London is the healthiest city in the world. The English countryside is the loveliest landscape in the world. The inhabitants of England, being the best in the world, are always the most welcome as immigrants into other countries.

‘English traders are the most enterprising and also exhibit the greatest integrity in the world. English women are the wonders of the world. “What do you think the most marvellous sight of England,” I asked the Sultan, runs one extract. ‘The women,’ he said simply.

‘The English have the best voices in the world. The English Zoo is the best conducted in the world. The English Underground has the brightest posters and the gayest stations’—not this time in the world, but in Europe.

‘England possesses the most beautiful and valuable pictures in the world; the best piece of statuary in the world—Eros in Piccadilly-circus—the finest judicial system in the world, the best police organisation in the world, the most capable Civil Servants in the world, the most efficient Post Office organisation in the world, the best educa-

tion in the world, the finest home life in the world, and, surprisingly, the best waiters and waitresses in the world.'

Finally, we possess the best climate in the world, and as a climax to all the rest we are very modest—'We are the most self-deprecating people on earth,' to take a final quotation from the London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*.

Well, now what about it? To take some of the more obvious pieces of self-flattery, I should say certainly not the best food; certainly not the best cooks, and quite certainly, not the most modest race in the world. Most people would deny that we had the best climate, though for my part I am all for it. Emphatically we are not the most intelligent, and I doubt if we are the most cultivated, people in the world. There are certain arts, that of music, for example, in regard to which we are definitely barbarians. Here is one picture that stuck in my mind. We are in a large Y.M.C.A. hut, filled with soldiers. The wireless is on continuously. Nobody listens very much, but the stream of swing and jazz forms a pleasant background to conversation. Then the strains of music proper, which is known as classical music, are heard. Immediately there goes up a howl, "Turn that damn thing off."

Supposing that I, too, were to echo the English slogan of 'The best in the world,' where would I look for our 'best'? I would give most marks for our political institutions. There are other people who know more about the art of living than we do, the French, for example. Compare the French housewives' treatment of that most punctually recurrent and pleasure productive of human needs, the need for food and drink, with the ordinary English housewife's reliance on the tin-opener as the sole instrument of cookery—and perhaps the Chinese. But I think that historians looking back upon us will find it in their hearts to say of us that we knew more about the art of living together in society than any other people, the art of combining the necessary minimum of uniform conduct with the greatest variety of individual character and scope for individual

freedom. After all, we laid in the modern world the foundations of democracy and representative institutions, which, as I understand them, are necessary conditions of a civilised life for any citizen.

Hence if I were to try to draw up our credit account, it is in this our contribution to the art of politics, and not in our wealth or our administrative ability, or in the fact that we got a start in the industrial revolution, that I would find our greatest ground for complacency and our greatest claim upon the gratitude of other peoples.

And the Scots

All sensible Englishmen hold the same opinion about the Scots, but no sensible Englishman has ever yet said what it is. How unlike the Scots, who are continually comparing themselves with the English, and always to their own advantage.

The Scots, indeed, have a regular myth about themselves. Hard-headed, practical, astute, energetic, diligent, silent, stubborn, and successful, they see themselves conquering the world and, not least, conquering Britain, as they rise to hold the highest executive, managerial and governmental posts in the State. There is very little substance in this myth, but to many a little underpaid, overworked Scottish invoice clerk living in Clapham it has brought comfort and enabled him to endure the obscurity of his lot.

I suppose it is to the Scottish need for reassurance that the prevalence and popularity of this myth is due. When you are convinced of your superiority you don't trouble to assert it. Compare the middle-class invention of the 'lady' and the 'gentleman' designed to blur the distinction between themselves and the upper classes. The upper classes, assured of their superiority, have no need to assure themselves of their ladylikeness or gentlemanliness, and behave as they please. Compare, too, the Cambridge man's confident

entry into a room as if it belonged to him with the Oxford man's even more confident entry as of one who did not care who it belonged to.

The dangers of Americanisation

Perhaps the greatest danger to the English way of life comes from the steady permeation of English habits and thought by America. How I agree with J. B. Priestley when he says 'Although it is a good thing for Americans to be very American, it is not a very good thing for the English to be semi-American.'

In the period between the two wars England was invaded by America; by American morals, manners, money, and mothers (mothers looking for aristocratic wives and husbands for their wealthy sons and daughters), to the enormous detriment of all things English. For example, the ideal of the English lady, the ideal of all nicely brought-up girls in my youth, has been replaced by the ideal of the Hollywood film star. The choice leaves me pretty cold, but, on the whole, if I had to maintain one or the other I should prefer the English lady; she would cost less in cosmetics and drinks.

Methods of American advertisers and salesmen invaded the English Press and enormous areas of paper were devoted to persuading people that they wanted something that they did not want, because it paid the firms who employed the advertisers to supply the something.

Sherry, on which our forefathers had got quietly drunk for centuries, gave way to cocktails on which our daughters got tight in ten minutes. The waltz, a gracious dancing to lilting melodies, gave way to a new kind of dancing, imported from America, which may be likened to a form of country walking, slightly impeded by a member of the opposite sex, conducted to the strains of Negroid music.

Our language was invaded by American slang, with the result that

the films have become largely incomprehensible to almost anybody of my generation. Worst of all, that most native of English growths, the music hall, with its songs about purely English things, beer, mothers-in-law, kippers, big feet, smelly feet, the lodger, and the rest, a happy and intimate show with the audience taking part, was put out of court by the films or by the smart revue in which personality is lost. It is the American influence that is responsible for the absence to-day of great artists like Marie Lloyd, Wilkie Bard, Little Tich, Harry Lauder, Gus Elen, who made personal contact with the audience.

All these changes seem to me to be disastrous. American things are, no doubt, good for Americans, very good for them, too, but English things are good for the English, so for goodness' sake let us continue to call our stage, our papers, our music halls, and our girls our own.

Refugees

Perhaps it is because we have pawned our souls to America that the large number of refugee intellectuals and artists in this country have so little appreciable effect on British culture. We have, of course, been affected by refugees in the past. The refugees from the French Revolution affected our ideas of furnishing and architecture, the Huguenots in the 17th century introduced new processes in the weaving of silk. But we are tougher now, more stabilised, more set, and it will take more than a few thousand refugees to produce any effect on us.

Consider some of the more primitive institutions of the British. Their Sunday, for example. On the Continent Sunday is a gay day, families meet in cafés, theatres open, newspapers are published. Religion, dutifully observed in the morning is quitted after midday. Compare this with the horror of the English Sunday. The theatres are shut, the cinemas in many towns are not open at all, or open

only if it is wet. The population yawns through tracts of illimitable boredom, suffering the maximum of temptation to all the more squalid sins, over-eating, over-drinking, family bickering, gossiping and slandering, through lack of something better to do. Does this conduce to religion? No, it doesn't. Have the refugees civilised our Sundays? Alas, they have not.

Or take our habit of perpendicular drinking in places where there is nowhere to sit, where our families cannot accompany us and where no food can be consumed. What could be more uncomfortable? But, alas, the refugees, used to the gay life of a café where a family can sit for hours on end over a cup of coffee or a glass of beer, have not civilised our pubs.

English cooking and English food

Or take our cooking—that long line of tasteless, insipid unappetising, starchy, repulsive English foods. Have the refugees had any effect on this? Alas, I wish that they had.

I have never been wholly able to fathom the reasons for our English indifference to variety in cookery; for the eternal shapes and prunes, and milk pudding, and the sprouts running with water, and the boiled and the mashed potatoes, and the boiled and semi-boiled cod, and the taking of meals ready prepared out of tins and boxes rather than go to the trouble of preparing them oneself; and the warming-up of foods that other people have cooked in order to avoid the job of cooking it oneself.

In France they have 160 cheeses; in England only three or four. Have our women then insisted upon keeping goats in order to make those delicious cheeses which goat's milk alone produces? They have not. In France and Germany, under the stress of war, between 40 and 50 different kinds of edible fungi are cooked and eaten. Have our women gone beyond the time-honoured mushroom (and nine

times out of ten they are suspicious even of that), and taken the trouble to find out what other kinds of fungi are edible? They have not.

For years now increasing numbers of people in this country have taken their food out of tins and boxes. Our women have not so much cooked food as warmed up food that has been bought ready cooked; not so much prepared meals as taken out of tins and cartons meals that were already prepared. In consequence large numbers of people had forgotten what fresh food tasted like until the war came and they started growing vegetables in their own gardens and allotments.

There even began to be people who preferred refrigerated or chilled or canned or preserved food to fresh. The taste of fresh food affronted them. And because the tastes of all tinned, canned, and bottled foods are insipid, they all tend to taste very much alike. Hence the array of sauces: O.K. Sauce, Heinz Sauce, Worcester Sauce, and Lea and Perrin's Sauce, and the rest, with which our tables have been garnished, in order that taste may be given to our tasteless food. An Englishman in Paris complained at a French restaurant of the absence of these sauces. Without them he said he could taste his fish and he did not like it.

Now those who take their food seriously derive pleasure from it, and make an art of it, insist on getting it as fresh as they can.

There is no particular virtue in food or drink, just because it is produced locally. But because it is produced locally, it is usually consumed fresh, and has, therefore, its proper and distinctive taste fresh upon it.

For my part I would sooner eat a humble herring or mackerel caught in a fishing-smack and gutted and cooked within an hour of being caught, than the noblest salmon or most magnificent sole that was ever sent all the way to London. No doubt there is a scientific reason for all this; the fresh food has more vitamins, is more nutritious, and so on; but I hate talking of food scientifically. What

matters in my view is not the nutritional value but the agreeable taste of food.

Animals eat to live; human beings, while not exactly living to eat, can yet derive from the business of eating sensations as agreeable as those which are evoked by any other art. If at this point I am asked, 'What about food values?' I answer 'A little bit of what you like does you good,' and if it tastes good then nine times out of ten it does you good.

Let me sum up what I feel about English food and cooking. We were the worst-fed nation in the world in peace, and in spite of the successful efforts of the Ministry of Food and the astonishing quantity of food which has been available throughout the length of the war, we are not so much the worst-fed as the worst-cooked-for nation even in war. Is there any hope that the women of England, instead of making worse copies of the bad models which they learned from their mothers will invent something for themselves? Regretfully, I answer, No, there isn't.

Paris

Any mention of food and cookery takes me inevitably to France, and France to what I think the most beautiful city in the world—Paris.

Beautiful things, looked askance at here, are valued there simply because they are beautiful. There are streets in Paris where every other shop is a picture shop, and almost every other house a studio. Paris has been deliberately planned with a view to beauty, with the result that whereas thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of Englishmen dream of a holiday in Paris, you never hear of a Frenchman dreaming of a holiday in London.

I can work in Paris better than anywhere else in the world. Breakfast in one's bedroom, a morning spent reading and writing, out to a

first-class lunch, then a walk in the Tuileries Gardens, or the Champs-Élysées or, if it is fine, in the Bois de Boulogne. Then more work, then a first-rate dinner, then talk at a café with artists, bohemians, writers, critics, ideamongers, all of them differ from one another, discussing everything under the heavens and knocking the bottom out of the universe night after night.

One other ingredient of the civilisation of Paris is the amenity of little things. I charge it against our English cities that little pleasures that all previous generations have been able to take for granted—for example, that old men should be able to sit quietly in the sun and read their paper in pleasant surroundings—are, with us, luxuries that can usually be enjoyed only by those who are rich enough to pay highly for them. Nowhere to lounge in London; nowhere where you can sit at a table with a cup of coffee and watch the world go by in the streets. Leisure and loafing; that we should not always be getting, pursuing our careers, trying to make money and get the better of somebody else, acquiring the means to make life possible without any practice in the art of living—all this seems to me to be a part of what is meant by civilisation, and all this one can enjoy in Paris more easily than in any other city in the world.

Population, Why must it be large ?

The falling birth-rate

The decline in the birth-rate has been regarded as a serious problem for some time past, and in 1944, the Government set up a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Simon, to investigate the causes and probable consequences of the decline and to recommend measures to arrest it.

First, what are the facts? Women now, on an average, are bearing less than half as many children as they did in the Victorian Age. In the 19th century, about 1880, the birth-rate was 32 per thousand of the population. It has been falling for over 60 years, and it is now about 15 per thousand.

It is true that the birth-rate has gone up slightly during the war from about 15.4 to 16.5 per thousand, but even so it is still only half of what it was in the Victorian Age. Also we are getting much older. There are a million fewer children in the country now than there were in 1931. In 1911, 57 out of every 100 people were under 30 years of age. In 1970, only 24 out of every 100 people will be under 30 years of age. In other words, we are getting fewer and older. And what is true of us is true of almost all the white peoples, except the Russian.

If no further changes in the birth and death rates take place, then, according to the calculations of Dr. Enid Charles in a book entitled 'The Menace of Under-Population' (Watts, 1936), the population of England and Wales, at present 45 million, would be reduced to less

than six million, about half, that is, the size of greater London, in about 200 years' time. There seems no particular reason, despite Government Commissions with their reports and recommendations, why the decline in the birth-rate should stop at the point now reached. If it were to continue to fall at the rate at which it has been falling, then Dr. Charles reckons, within the space of 300 years, a population of 45 million would be reduced to 45,000, which is the size of a small English town.

Some of the causes of the decline

There are a number of obvious reasons for the decline. The first, perhaps, is that so many people have nowhere to bring up a family. Take, for example, the country. Here is a bit out of a letter that I received some time ago: 'My husband's mother had 14 children. My mother had 16, with three bed-rooms, no bathroom, pump in yard, bucket "lav," stone floors, no back doors, drain at the front door.' You may say that that bit belonged to the bad old Victorian Age. So it did, but the present isn't much better, for the writer goes on to describe her own situation: 'We are swarmed with beetles and mice; rats and flies go into the bucket lavatories and then into the pantry on my six ounces of bacon. My next-door neighbour can hear every word we say, the walls are like cardboard; men have no idea how we women live, no space round our house like the birds in their nests; it is awful to live by a pair of looney old maids, with their animals and mischievous tongues.' And so, she concludes, 'No more children for me.' A pity to spoil this with comment.

As for the towns, read a book called 'Branch Street,' by Marie Paneth, published in 1944 by Allen and Unwin, which describes how children are brought up in the slums of London. It will make your hair stand on end.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, there is a spread of the

knowledge of the methods of birth control, which have previously been the monopoly of the upper and middle classes, through almost every stratum of the population.

Thirdly, more and more women are employed, and therefore the age of marriage gets later and later. They are better educated, and when they can earn for themselves and go about and have a good time, they naturally do not want to spend all their days pigging about, in a kitchen and a scullery, drying babies' nappies and getting meals for tired husbands.

Fourthly, children have to be kept at school until they are 14 or 15. It is probable that their education within the years to come will be longer. This means that children are no longer a financial asset. They have to be kept, fed, and clothed while at school instead of, as in the Victorian Age, earning their living in mine, mill, or factory, and so contributing to the family exchequer.

Fifthly—and this applies particularly to the middle and lower-middle classes—people want their children to have a better start in life than they did themselves. Hence the desire to give them a good education, a better education, at any rate, than people think you can get in a 'State school.' For this 'better education,' at present, they have to pay. The more children, the less money there is to go round to pay for the 'better education.' Therefore, one doesn't have more children than one can afford to equip with high quality of education.

Sixthly, the motive of snobbery—'We must keep up with the Joneses' and 'keeping up with the Joneses' means having a car. No room for both nursery and garage and no money for both.

Finally, I suspect there is something which is more deep-seated than any of these things—the state of a civilisation in which, to so many of us, life seems without point and purpose, which is why we insist on trying to give it point by having a good time at all costs.

The spiritual factor

This factor is difficult to state in concrete terms, and I shall call it the spiritual factor. It doesn't seem to me correct to describe this merely as a refusal to bring children into a world which is subject to the recurrent scourge of war—children who when they have grown to manhood, may quite likely be blinded, burned, mangled, or disembowelled by high explosives. When I speak of the spiritual factor, I have in mind a similar drop in the birth-rate in all European countries, with the sole important exception of Russia. Suppose one asks, then, what is the common factor present in all the European countries but absent in Russia?

It is here, I think, that the question of values comes in. Why, broadly speaking, did so many young women in England before the war prefer cars to cradles? I think the answer is to be found in their general conception of life and its value. To many peoples at many different periods of man's history their life has seemed supremely well worth living, partly because it was regarded only as a preparation for a different and a better life. This sense of preparation gave it point and purpose; it was a race to be run, an adventure to be attempted, and so on. In other words, most peoples at most times have had a pretty strong religious belief. This is absent in the peoples in Europe and America to-day, and as it declines there goes with it the sense of point and purpose which it brings. For in the absence of a strong religious belief, and the sense which it gives of a meaning and purpose in life, there is only one reasonable philosophy, which is: 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' In other words, 'Let us have as good a time as we can, while we can.' Now it is to those who hold this philosophy that the cradle and the baby in the cradle, and the claims that the baby makes on the income of the father and the time of the mother, are most damaging.

I do not believe, then, that there will be a rise in the birth-rate until there is a revival of a sense of meaning and purpose, which the

Russian Revolution has given to the Russians, and which religion and the desire to equip oneself for a better world gave in the nineteenth century to the English.

Make higher education free for all, take wives out of employment, get rid of the idea that they should live the same kind of lives and share the interests and pursuits of their husbands, provide adequate houses and secure employment, and restore a faith in religion and you will again see a crop of children. Unfortunately I don't know the recipe for doing or producing any of these things.

Is it a disaster?

Now everybody automatically assumes that the fall of the birth-rate is a national calamity. People hold up their hands in horror and say, What a disaster! I have never been able understand why.

If we continued to have as many children as the Victorians there would be something like 200,000,000 people in England at the end of this century. A dreadful thought. But the 19th century was quite abnormal. It is estimated that there has been human life of some kind on this planet for nearly a million years. Up to about 150 years ago there were something like 700,000,000 people in the world; then the numbers rapidly shot up and now there are over 2,000,000,000. Obviously, mankind cannot go on increasing at that rate.

At the end of the 17th century the population of England and Wales was between five and six million. In 1800 it was nearly nine million; in 1900 32½ million; to-day it is 45 million. Could we employ all these? We could not. We had a surplus of two million unemployed on our hands. Could we even house them properly? We could not. Millions lived in slums and hovels. Could we feed them properly? We could not. Nearly 20 million of them, according to Sir John Boyd Orr, were living on a diet insufficient for

perfect health. Why, then, clamour for more, when we cannot deal adequately with the numbers that we have?

All this being so, let us soberly ask ourselves the question : are not there too many people in England to-day? Too many for comfort and decency. Wouldn't life be more spacious and comfortable if there were fewer of us, and isn't what matters not quantity of life, but quality?

Look at the queues, and look at the cars. Before the war 4.8 people in this country had cars, but the roads were so crowded that a journey from Brighton to London on a Sunday evening took several hours. In the world after the war, given prosperity, higher wages, and shorter hours, you can expect the number of cars to go up to the American proportion of 25 to 30 per cent. of the population, that is six times as many as before the war. What are the roads going to be like then? I see them covered with a solid mass of metal stretching in a single inextricable stationary jam from John o' Groats to Land's End.

Look at education. Could we educate our children properly? We could not. Nine out of every ten left school at the age of 14. And we never have been able to educate them properly, there have been too many in the classes. You cannot teach 50 or 40, or even 30, properly. The well-to-do know this and see that their children are taught in classes of 10 or 15, or, at the outside, of 20.

It used to be said that it was necessary to have large masses of working people in order to keep some people, namely, those who did not work but only directed or supervised or owned, in comfortable idleness. Hence, slaves, serfs, and wage slaves. But machines can now do most of the dull and drudging work, and we can look forward to a time when one man and a machine can produce as much as 50 or a 100 men used to do without a machine. No need then any longer for the extra 49 human beings, doomed all their lives to dull and drudging work in order that they might make a living by the sweat of their brow, or make profits for somebody else.

It is said again that you must have a large population in order to protect yourself from the enemy in war. If wars are going to continue, this, of course, is true. But if wars are going to continue, our civilisation is doomed anyway. Hence we must, it seems to me, budget for a world without war.

And what scale of values is it that puts quantity before quality? Is it because we want to be a great Empire? But why be a great Empire. Is national greatness more important than the existence of happy, healthy, well-educated people? In the past wars, pestilence and disease kept down the surplus population. In the eighteenth century four out of every five children born in London died in the first six months of their lives.

Or a blessing?

Now suppose, for example, it were possible—and I am not enough of an economist to know whether it is possible or not—to offer a better life to fifteen million than it is to forty-five million; why not accept the reduction to fifteen as good? The answer, of course, is, or always has been, obvious. Because it would put us at a disadvantage with the jumping population of our neighbours. But that answer presupposes a world of suspicious competitive, nation States, each trying to get the better of the other and to build up its population in order that it may do so. In other words, it presupposes the kind of world we lived in before the war, the world which brought about the war. Now if we are going to go back to that world after this war, then it will have been fought in vain. Moreover, such is the destructive power of modern warfare that unless we eliminate war, our civilisation will sooner or later collapse anyway. And here let me point out in passing that a great many people have always maintained that wars are inevitable as the result of the pressure of expanding populations. But if populations cease to expand there is

no need to produce a large population in order to protect yourself from the results of their expansion.

All the evils I have described would be diminished if there were fewer people. There would be more room in England, the towns would cease to spread like octopuses over the countryside, spreading yearly their tentacles of pink over fresh areas of England's green, and no-more-pleasant, land. We should be able to move about with comfort and we could all have our cars without turning ourselves into the procession of snails which used to crawl through the streets of our big cities. Our classes at school would be sufficiently small for everybody to get a decent education. There would be no more slums.

Surely the artificial control of birth is more desirable from the point of view of human happiness than first producing children and then turning them into cannon fodder or letting them die through under-nourishment, or live starved and stunted lives through under-education. All sensible people realise this, and refuse to have children unless they know that they can adequately clothe, feed, house, and educate them. Hence it is the feckless, the irresponsible and very poor from whom the national human resources are in the main recruited.

So I suggest that when one looks at the question without reference to foreign politics and asks oneself quite simply, might it not be better in a future in which machines have taken over ever more and more of the productive processes for which we formerly required masses of unskilled labour, that we should be a smaller people, but better educated, better housed, better fed, and better civilised, the answer is assuredly 'Yes.'

So I should like to look forward to a return to an England populated by about seven million, which was the number maintained by this island in the reign of Good Queen Anne. My only regret is that I shall be dead before it happens.

Artificial insemination

Another possible cause for the decline in the birth-rate, which must not be overlooked (I didn't mention it above because at the moment there is no strong evidence either for or against it) is a decline in the real fertility of the male or the female. That is to say, either the husband or the wife may in increasing numbers be sterile. Now if the wife is sterile, nothing can be done about it. But if it is the husband, then something can be done—namely, artificial insemination of the wife. This is the fertilisation of the female by male spermatozoa, which have been artificially preserved by scientific processes.

Now you would have thought in view of the grave concern shown by the State over the declining birth-rate that artificial insemination would have been welcomed with open arms as a means of bringing children to many childless marriages. But no! On the contrary, it has been greeted with grave suspicion, and the Minister of Health even announced that births resulting from the practice must be registered as illegitimate.

What views would I have expressed if I had been present at an early debate on this question in the House of Lords? I should have pointed out that artificial insemination is practised both in America and, I believe, on a large scale in Russia, and I should note the statement by Lord Brabazon that there are 10,000 applications in the United States for artificial insemination from the childless women of sterile husbands. I would remind the House that I had been told by doctors in English hospitals that they, too, were in continual receipt of similar applications, and that artificial insemination was already being practised on a substantial scale in this country, the conditions always observed being that the father is guaranteed immune from any heritable disease, such as tuberculosis and (in most cases) that his name is not divulged to the potential mother. So much I would say as to the basic facts.

But since it is both possible and actual, I should then ask whether it is desirable. First, what about the moral and religious aspects?

The Church, I should have gathered from the debate in the House of Lords, was already concerning itself with the interesting question whether a woman who had a child in this way was guilty of sin. I should violently repudiate the notion. Who is the Church that it should manufacture new sins in this way? The insanitary tendency to multiply sins is a mark of Puritanism which is repugnant to me as destructive of people's pleasure. There are some people who will never call a pleasure a pleasure when they can call it a sin. Moreover, suppose that you believe, as I do, that man is not all body, but has an immaterial element, call it a soul, spirit, or what you will, and that this spirit may conceivably survive the break-up of the body in which it is here incarcerated. Some noble lords seemed to think that if one accepted this view, then artificial insemination was wicked. I cannot for the life of me see why.

Either man's spirit is wholly bound up with, and dependent on his body, or is not. If you say that it is, you are a materialist, and you must believe that the spirit disappears with the body. If you say that it's not, then the way in which bodies happen to be manufactured does not really affect the life and prospects of the spirit, any more than the way in which bodies from which the spirit has departed are disposed of affects the spirit. Now we don't know how the spirit gets into the body. It is one of the eternal mysteries.

Assuming we don't take the materialist view, then we may think of life as an immaterial activity, entering into and animating matter, very much after the manner in which an electric current runs down a copper wire. Is the current in the wire? Not in any straightforward sense of the word. All that we can say is that when the wire is in the right condition it is capable of receiving and transmitting the current. But nobody supposes that the wire is the current which electrifies it. The point is of interest in connection with researches upon which bio-chemists are engaged relative to the manufacture

of protoplasm, that is to say, the material stuff of which the bodies of living organisms are constructed. To identify the making of living protoplasm with the creation of life would be like saying that the architect who had built a house had also constructed the tenants who came to inhabit it.

This part of my speech in the House of Lords would have been designed to bring out the point that, unless you are a materialist, how you make bodies, whether by natural or artificial processes, will have no bearing at all upon the nature and prospects of the life or, if you prefer the word, the soul, which inhabits them. No question, then, of morals or religion here involved.

I should then turn to the social implications. One point raised was that the relations between husbands and wives who had been artificially inseminated would be unhappy. Is it intended to imply that the relations of childless couples are never unhappy? Many women who are sterile, or whose husbands are sterile, want children so badly that they adopt them. But an adopted child is not the same as the child of one's own body. Why should a wife be deprived of the joy of bringing a child into the world because her husband is sterile? What about the State? Unlike me, the State wants children, and regrets that the birth-rate is declining. Is it, then, to be deprived of children who might otherwise have been brought up to be useful, and valuable citizens merely because of a scruple which has no backing in reason? What of the freedom of the individual? Who, or what, I should want to know, is the State, or who or what is the Church, or who or what is anybody else to interfere with the right of women to have children if they desire them?

Education

The objects of education

What are the objects of education? I should have thought there were three. First, vocational, to train a boy for a trade or profession, so that he can earn his living as a skilled worker by hand or brain when he goes out into the world. Secondly, socially, to train a boy so that he can play his part as an active, alert, critically minded citizen of a democracy. Thirdly, what used to be called humane, so to train a boy that he develops his personality to the full, and realises all that he has in him to be, as a gardener treats and tends a growing tree so that it may grow to maturity exhibiting most fully the distinctive characteristics of that particular type of tree.

I make that point because, after all, most of us, for one reason or another, are mutilated or frustrated in respect of the full development of our nature, which is one of the reasons why even to-day our country chooses its leading men from about one-fifth of its population; the other four-fifths never have a chance to show whether they have it in them to be leaders or not.

It seems, to me essential for democracy that people should be educated from the social and political point of view, in other words that they should be enabled to become men and not sheep ready to flock into the appropriate pens at the voice of the shepherd crying the latest political scare or stunt. Much education in England to-day, and all education in dictatorship countries, is designed to give information without intelligence, that is to say to open a man's ears

to the cry of the scare- or stunt-monger without giving him power to criticise the scares and the stunts. Take, for example, the success of advertisement. If I were to say in this book that I, C. E. M. Joad, am the most modest man in England, few would believe me, but if I spent a million pounds on having every hoarding in the country covered with vast posters announcing in flaming letters 'C. E. M. Joad is the most modest man alive,' I'd wager my bottom dollar that within a couple of weeks most of my fellow citizens would become convinced that I had an abnormal shrinking from publicity. In other words, most of my fellow citizens would be the victims to mass suggestion, which had absolutely no relation to truth.

Hence, too, the success of patent medicines, astrology, Christian Science, spiritualism, and all the quack nostrums for the care of the ills of mind, or soul and body.

Well, now, education which teaches a man how, and not what, to think is the best safeguard against this sort of thing. How important it is one can realise by considering the effect of its contrary in the totalitarian State. 'The receptive power of the masses is vast,' says Hitler in 'Mein Kampf.' 'Their understandings are feeble and their memory is short.' And therefore—he goes on—one is entitled to lie to them whenever the lie will serve.

The thing was put admirably in a recent poem by Ida Proctor which describes the predicament of the mis-educated citizen of a dictatorship:

miserable condition
*The thought I think; I think is not my thought,
 But is the thought of one who
 Thought that I ought to think his thought.*

Shortly then, to be taught what to think is the proper education for the victim of a dictatorship, to be taught how to think for a citizen of democracy.

The status of teachers

In education, especially for the citizens of democracy, teachers have a paramount role to play. But what value do we place on them? They are, in my view, the most undervalued class in the community. I will not speak here of their selfless devotion to their profession under every conceivable handicap; I do not mention the thousand and one odd jobs which have been imposed on them in war-time—collecting milk money, collecting War Savings Certificate money, filling up medical forms, billeting children, calling on evacuee children, taking children to air-raid shelters, supervising milk distribution, distributing children's dinners, doing, in fact, every conceivable thing except teaching, which is the one thing they are trained for and qualified to do, and which the community presumably pay them to do.

I have in mind the mere fact of the teachers' intelligence. Teachers really are more intelligent than the general ruck of us. That in most cases is why they became teachers, originating as clever little boys and girls at school who usually won scholarships to secondary schools and then exhibitions to teachers' training colleges.

Now, I value and honour intelligence and believe that any nation which persistently undervalues it as ours does is committing a sin against the Holy Ghost. We pay a teacher for educating our children rather less than in the war we have been paying emergency conductresses on Glasgow trolley-buses.

The salaries of teachers are a scandal, varying, as they do, between £150 to £180 a year for women, rising to about £300, which is the retiring salary at the end of 40 years' service, and between £180 and £200 for men, rising, at the outside, to about £400 when the man retires.

It is less than a Civil Servant gets, or a doctor, or a lawyer; less than a probation officer, a hospital almoner, a welfare superintend-

ent, or a Local Government or Employment Exchange officer. And it is not enough to marry and bring up a family on.

Yet you would have thought that the duties of the teacher, including as they do, the training of the minds and the forming of the characters of the coming generation were not less important than those of the business man who with half the teacher's brains and none of his training makes ten times the teacher's salary by buying and selling commodities, or the advertiser who persuades other people that they need the commodity which he wants to sell them.

We give the engineer who builds a bridge, the architect who builds a house, more than the teacher who builds the citizen. We pay the dentist who fills the teeth of our children more than the teachers who fill their heads, presumably because we think teeth more important than minds. This seems to be a topsy-turvy scale of values.

I think that the teachers, with the miners, get the rawest deal of any class of the community, and that their salaries ought to be doubled at a stroke as an earnest of further financial good will to come. Whether the community agrees with me or not, it will have to do something of the kind I suggest if it wants education to go on. And that is why at the Labour Party Conference in London in 1943, I advocated the return of 20,000 teachers from the Armed Forces.

The school leaving age

The Labour Party had pledged itself to the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 at the end of the war, and to 16 within three years of the end of the war. The Government agreed, and provision to this effect has been included in the Education Act recently placed on the Statute Book.

I don't want to begin a lecture on the value of education, or its importance as the condition of equal opportunity—equal oppor-

tunity to develop one's talents, to show what one is made of, and to go right up the social, economic, and industrial ladders.

I don't want to stress the fact that we have been choosing our great men from about one-fifth of our population because four-fifths of us leave school at the age of 14 and never have a chance to show whether we are great or not.

I am taking all this for granted and pointing out merely that, if you will the end, you must also will the means, and, therefore, that it is foolish to promise to raise the school-leaving age to 15 at the end of the war if circumstances make it impossible, and hypocritical if you know that they will make it impossible.

What are the circumstances? To raise the school-leaving age to 15 we should want 50,000 more teachers than are functioning at the present time. The avenues for the training of male teachers are blocked. Broadly speaking, no men teachers are being trained; they are all being diverted into the Army.

Upon the teachers who are teaching every kind of odd job is being imposed. For if education is the Cinderella of the war, the teachers are its maid of all work.

When they do teach, they teach vast classes of 50 to 60, with the result that the next generation, the generation which is to make the better world after the war, are growing up into little gangsters and barbarians, simply through lack of proper supervision. Not only is absenteeism reaching appalling proportions, but any teacher will tell you that it is impossible to cope with a class of between 50 and 60, let alone the difficulties in regard to lack of paper, pens, blackboards, ink, and all the raw materials of the teacher's profession, and an evacuated school on the other side of the glass partition.

Now you cannot make omelettes without scrambling teachers, scrambling them, that is to say, out of the Forces and back into the teaching profession, to do what we have all agreed should be done, namely, cope with the floods of extra children who will crowd the

schools when we raise the leaving age to 15, in classes which are sufficiently small to make adequate teaching possible.

If, then, we really mean what we say about the importance of education, we should show that we *do* mean it, and are not merely mouthing pious aspirations, by making it possible.

We need 50,000 teachers to restore the number to the pre-war level of 180,000. We shall want another 60,000 if we raise the school-leaving age to 15, and yet another 60,000 if we raise it to 16. But we shall never get them unless we offer better pay and better conditions.

The training of teachers

And, of course, there should be a longer training. Two years in a training college, sexually segregated, regulated by antique disciplines with drinking and often smoking forbidden, and early to bed in and early to rise from Spartan and unheated bedrooms, with plenty of rice and prunes, is obviously not good enough, I would do away with the teachers' training colleges altogether, and, instead, I would establish civic universities at which the student would get a general course of not less than three years in economics, local government, history, and languages, and at the end of which, and *not, as now, at the beginning*, he or she would decide if he or she was going to become a teacher or not. If one did decide on teaching, one would take a special course in teaching methods, to last for another year.

The suggestion has been advanced that part of a teacher's training should be social work. I am not sure about this.

Social work usually means looking after or interfering in the lives of people poorer or humbler than oneself.

It means, in other words, being in a position of superiority either because one has more money, or better manners, or more social competence, or is simply older.

Now the teacher is going to be all his life in a position of superi-

ority simply by virtue of his superior age; so if he is to do something besides train to be a teacher—and I think he should—it should be something which takes him out into the world on equal terms with others.

Yes, but what sort of a world? The office is not much of a world; it is as narrow as, or narrower than, the school. To serve behind the bar of a pub or to drive a taxi will give a man contact with every variety of his fellows and enable him to talk with ease and opportunity to all sorts of men.

For my part I would insist on a course of agriculture so that a man may come to know something of natural processes, and require him to spend a year on a farm before he goes back to his teaching. Similarly, I'd require women to learn cookery and housewifery and would give every woman a State Bonus on reaching the age of 25 provided she could pass the requisite tests.

More important, perhaps, than any of these recipes for prospective teachers is travel, the getting to know young people in other countries, the attending of courses in foreign schools, the spending of nights in hostels in foreign countries. I'd make every potential teacher spend a year in what the 18th century called *The Grand Tour*, visiting most European countries, attending courses in famous foreign universities and obtaining some knowledge of foreign languages and customs.

The important thing is to break the present vicious circle—or, rather, the two vicious circles—whereby the primary schoolboy goes to secondary school, training college, and then back to the primary school as teacher, and the public school boy, after leaving his preparatory school, goes to the public school, the University, and then usually back to his public school, without in either case any intervening period in the world, and in no case any travelling from the one circle to the other.

In other words, I would establish one pool of teachers for a single system of State schools. But that begins a long story which is too long to tell now.

The qualities of a good teacher

Teaching is not everyone's 'cup of tea.' Many brilliant men seem quite incapable of imparting their wisdom to others. Now why is this? Because to know is one thing; to convey what you know, another. What are the qualities of the successful teacher? Here are three.

First, intellectual imagination. That is, the ability to put yourself imaginatively into another person's intellectual shoes, to see with his eyes, to realise what he will find difficult and why he will find it difficult.

Now, intellectual sympathy or imagination is a quite specific quality. People can be emotionally imaginative and psychologically obfuse, and yet possess it.

For example, I am extraordinarily bad at knowing what people are feeling, and can walk with a serene confidence into a room full of people who dislike me intensely, precisely because I never realise that they do dislike me.

But I am rather good at knowing what people are thinking, probably because I am more interested in their thoughts than in their feelings, and am, therefore, intellectually sympathetic while being emotionally inconsiderate. And because I *do* know what they are thinking, I can see a difficulty from their point of view, and proceed to explain it as I would to myself if it were my own difficulty. In other words, while emotionally simple and insensitive, I am intellectually subtle and sensitive.

Secondly, not *telling* those you are teaching, but making them see

it for themselves. Making them 'see it for themselves' depends upon the art of asking questions.

Socrates, one of the greatest of the world's teachers, proceeded almost exclusively by the method of question and answer; he never told anybody anything, but by skilful questioning made them find it out for themselves.

The advantage of this is that you remember what you find out for yourself, but usually forget what you have been told.

Thirdly, regarding teaching not as a process whereby 'A,' who knows something, transmits it to 'B,' who does not, but as a co-operative undertaking whereby 'A' and 'B' find out by discussion something which may previously be unknown to either of them.

The lecture system as we practise it in our universities is, for both teachers and the students, only too often a sop to laziness and an excuse for not thinking, the average lecture consisting of the transfer of a certain amount of miscellaneous material from the notebook of the lecturer to the notebooks of the students, without passing through the minds of either. Nobody should ever talk to students without insisting, part of the time, that they talk to him.

Mercifully, I have never had to teach the young, and speak only of the communication of knowledge to adults who, presumably, want to learn.

Co-education

I am a trifle shy of saying much about co-education. I was once asked a question on this subject when sitting on a Brains Trust, I must not say where—Brains Trusts are held in many places—with an eminent lady, I dare not say who, celebrated for her championship of women's rights and causes. We were asked, 'What do you think of co-education?' I took it upon myself to say that I thought it was well enough for girls, but not so well for boys.

'What do you mean by that, Dr. Joad?' cried the eminent lady, scenting a slight upon the sex.

Partly, I am afraid, to annoy the eminent lady, more out of sheer mischief--I had had one or two drinks--I replied: 'Well, I think it is a good thing for members of the inferior sex to be brought up in contact with, and so raised to the level of members of the superior sex, but correspondingly bad for members of the superior sex . . .'

I just got as far as this when a hand, a female hand, was stretched out behind the head of the gentleman sitting between us, and four fingers and a thumb grasped my ear. They did not tweak it, they practically wrenched the member from the skull, to which it has ever since been precariously attached. The eminent lady is, mercifully, not present at the moment, but her shadow haunts me, and my discussion must be restrained.

I agree in principle with the Russian educational policy of stopping co-education after the kindergarten stage. In my own experience I have found that almost all the boys I have met who had been educated at a co-educational school seem to have been handicapped by the process. The girls I have met seem, on the contrary, to have benefited.

To see what grounds there may be for stopping co-education at the age of ten, let us consider what are the differences between boys and girls. Interesting in themselves, they are doubly interesting because they are pointers to that all-absorbing topic, the differences between men and women.

I have read a number of psychologists on this. Professor Burt tells us that there are no large innate differences in the mental constitution of the two sexes. The two main differentiations, according to another psychologist, Thorndike, are of the greater predominance of the fighting instinct in males and of the nursing instinct in females. The result: that males tend to be angry, inquisitive, aggressive, constructive; females to be secretive, gregarious, and maternal. Thus it is the nursing instinct which accounts for the

female tendency to care for, to console, and to fuss over males.

I suppose every woman worth her salt thinks of the man she loves under a double aspect—first, as a warrior who must make his way; secondly, as a child who has lost his way. It is for the latter attitude that the nursing instinct is responsible. ✓

There is a difference in interests. Girls tend to be more interested in their immediate surroundings, in what is pretty and ornamental, and in the finished product; boys in what is more remote from them, in what is useful, in what is general and what is abstract. That is one reason why boys are better at maths. than girls.

There is a difference in forms of expression. Boys seek expression in investigating, exploring, constructing; girls through artistic and emotional channels. That is why girls tend to be better at English literature, at writing and acting. It is also why they talk more and talk less to the point. (This last characteristic they seem to retain in later life.)

There is a difference in method of approach to a subject. That of girls is more emotional and intuitive. Confronted with the facts, they jump to conclusions, often to wrong ones, and then, when they have come to be women, shelter themselves behind intuition. A woman's intuition may be defined as the sort of thing a woman has when she is wrong.

Girls again think more in terms of immediate concrete visible things around them. They are, therefore, more influenced than boys by like or dislike of their teachers.

Girls have less interest in intellectual truth and less delight in it for its own sake. As compared with boys they lack curiosity and are more disposed to believe what they are told.

One could go on multiplying differences along these lines. But is there anything in them which demands that the two sexes should be educated separately? I don't think that there is. The difference cited by the Russians is that boys develop later than girls, and that between 10 and 13 they are almost stationary in development. Of

course they do. Touching wood for fear of the eminent lady, I should say the more highly developed the organism the longer the period of its development. The longer, in other words, it takes to prepare.

Let me add finally that all these statements are generalisations, and subject, of course, to innumerable exceptions. Any woman who doesn't like them can jump to the conclusion that she is an exception.

Education for the Rich—and for the poor

I have been asked what I considered to be the best school-leaving age for working-class children. I couldn't answer it just like that, because of the implications of the phrase 'working class.' I could not, that is to say, agree that because a child's origin is in the working class it should, for that reason, have less education or more education than any other child, or leave school at a different age from that deemed appropriate for middle or upper-class children. The amount, degree, kind and length of education that a child should receive should depend not upon its origin but upon its abilities.

How much education according to difference of abilities is an enormous question, but my guess is that most people are strictly uneducable after 16, and should, therefore, from that date onwards be specially prepared for some profession or trade in a technical school or college, with occasional spells of practical work on farms, in factories, in workshops, in offices, during the period of training, determined by what one is being trained for. Those whose abilities enable them to profit by education, who can understand history, pursue science, comprehend philosophy—in other words, grapple with social problems—the intellectuals, should stay at school till 18 and go to the university until 22, whatever their origin.

However, that is a different question. The important thing is to

realise what an enormous pull in life a long period of education gives one, and how unfair it is that children should be denied that 'pull' just because they come from working-class families.

To take one example. Only 2 per cent of the population of this country go to public schools, nevertheless 56 per cent. of the members of the House of Commons come from public schools. You have got 2,000 times as good a chance of entering Parliament if you have been at Eton as you would have if you had been at a national school.

Now, the House of Commons is the seat of power in this country, and what is true of the House of Commons is true of the higher positions in all the professions; is true of the generals, bishops, barristers, business heads, Harley-street surgeons, and all the rest of those who hold power and make the money in this country.

To achieve any and all of these positions you need a long education; if you *have* had a long education, have been to the right school, been to Oxford, know the right people, and so on, many of them fall like ripe plums into your mouth.

In short, it is the anomalies that arise out of what I call the dual system of education—one for the rich and another for the poor—which are more than anything else responsible for making us what Disraeli called 'the Two Nations.'

The public schools—are they good or bad

Which brings me to the ever-recurring topic of public schools.

There is continuous controversy as to whether the public schools are good or bad. Obviously, like all human institutions, they are both. In so far as they are good they should be retained, but there is no reason why the good should be reserved for a particular class in the community. It ought to be made available for all. In so far as they are bad, the evil ought to be eliminated.

Now, to apply that generalisation to the suggestion which has been made that public and secondary schools should be merged.

If the good is to be made available for all, then one principle and one only should govern admittance to the public schools, and that is the ability of the pupil to profit by the education which they give—not, therefore, as at present, the size of his parent's bank balance. In other words, admission to the public schools should be by scholarship examination, and poor parents should be remunerated by the State for the loss of earnings involved.

There is, however, a danger here. You can keep the public schools, as institutions, apart, and extend a number of free places to State-aided pupils from elementary and secondary schools, or you can amalgamate public and secondary schools as part of a general State system.

The first course is open to the objection that it will skim off the top drawer of potential ability wherever it turns up in the working-classes, empty its contents into the public schools, declass them, and so sterilise them from the working-class point of view and for working-class purposes. Such a course does not bridge the gulf between the dispossessed and the possessing, the poor and the rich. It only takes the best brains that turn up in the ranks of the dispossessed and the poor, carries them across the gulf, and recruits them for the possessing and the rich.

Now it seems to me essential, if we are to make a better world, to end what is, in fact, a caste system whereby we educate a certain proportion of each generation to be members of a superior caste, entered through the public schools, I should, therefore, vote strongly for the second course, which is the amalgamation of public and secondary schools into a general State system, in which all places are free and to which entry should be given solely on the score of ability. If we are to have a class system, and I do not see how that is to be avoided, let it be a system based on brains and not on blood or bank balances.

Therefore, I am all in favour of bringing the so-called public schools into the general state secondary school system. As to the question whether such action would merely lower the standard of public schools, it is clear that if higher education was extended only to those whose talents fitted them to receive it, the standard would go, not down, but up. But it is not clear to me that the standard of education in public schools is necessarily higher than in secondary schools. In some of the third-rate public schools it may even be lower, though in the first-rate schools—Eton, Winchester, and Harrow—it is certainly very much higher.

The public schools and the Fleming Committee

In July, 1942, the President of the Board of Education appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Fleming to go into the question of public schools. Their report was published in 1943, and the recommendations received considerable publicity. They propose that the public schools should be invited to enter into an arrangement with the State whereby the Board of Education will grant scholarships or bursaries covering the whole or part of both tuition and boarding fees according to the amount of the parents' income. Schools coming into the scheme would be required to reserve a quarter of their places for children coming from State elementary schools.

All this is to the good, but it does not go far enough. First, there will be a distinction within the public schools between pupils whose fees have been paid by the State and those with parents who can afford to send them. The first will be looked down on by the second.

Secondly, what is to be done with those public schools who do not come into the scheme? Presumably they will go on as before and have an even higher snob value than before, just because they are *not* contaminated with 'Board School' boys.

Even at the best the public schools cater for only about 2½ per cent. of the population, and to have been to one of them will, even under the Fleming Committee's proposals, give a boy or girl an enormous and unfair start in life.

Another course which has received favour in several public schools is an R.A.F. Benevolent Fund scheme which would ensure the admission of the sons of fallen airmen at reduced fees. This again rests on the presumption that boys who go to public schools receive a more intensive and more valuable education than those who don't. At any rate, they get better-paid teachers; each boy gets a larger share of each teacher, and he gets it for a longer time.

These, presumably, are advantages. The question is, who benefits by them? Those whose talents and abilities enable them to derive most profit from intensive education? Not at all. Those who have had the luck to be born in the right bedrooms, that is to say, the bedrooms of households whose wage-earner has a balance at the bank.

It follows that, if a boy gets into a public school cheap, he gets it as a form of charity. And since boys are neither more nor less snobbish than grown-ups, if the fact gets known he tends to be looked down on, in just the same way that the State-aided pupil under the Fleming Committee's recommendations would be looked down on.

I can remember at my own school how we looked down our noses at the son of a small farmer who came to school every September with his hands toughened and reddened by work in the harvest fields. We did not mind him getting in the harvest; what we did mind was his being the son of a man whom we knew was not as rich as our own parents.

I am very far from wanting to cast reproaches on schools who let boys in at below the standard cost; let them continue to do so, and all honour to them. I am very far from wanting to suggest that the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund should *not* help the sons of airmen who

have been killed in the war to go to public schools. The scheme in itself is deserving of the highest praise.

What there is in my criticism is levelled against the whole system which puts school and parents and boys in this difficult and anomalous position. My belief is that the education of its citizens should be a charge upon the State, not as it is at present up to the age of 14, but all the way up the educational ladder.

This would mean that all children would proceed up the same educational ladder, would ascend as many rungs of it as their abilities permitted, and charitable schemes, with their possibilities of patronage and their temptations to snobbery, would be unnecessary.

In short, my view about the place of the public school in the English educational system is that we shall never have educational justice, get rid of social and economic inequality—never, therefore, get rid of snobbery—until all schools are made free for all pupils, when parents are no longer able to buy a superior brand of education for their children because they happen to have a balance at the bank.

Boarding schools

I am not, and let me make this point quite clear, against the public school because it is generally a boarding school. Too many are against boarding schools because they think that they, the parents, are good for their children. I see little ground for this belief.

If we want to build a house or a bridge we call in an expert architect or engineer and ask him to do the job for us. If we want to build something which is much more important than either a house or a bridge, namely, an adult human being, the citizen of a democracy, we are apparently content to leave the job to any chance pair of persons who happen to be able to produce a human being.

But there is no evidence that because we can produce children we

are the right people to bring them up; still less evidence that children have any passionate desire for the company of their parents, the fact of the matter being that many average homes are little brick boxes of ill-assorted humanity, with the old thwarting the young people for behaving like young people, and the young spiting the old people for behaving like old people. *Surrounding Circumstances.*

The right environment for the young is the company of their contemporaries. Sent to school, they will find their own level and, what is more important, find out for the first time, in the company of those of their own age, what sort of creatures they themselves really are. To go to boarding school is the beginning of self-knowledge. Children at home tend to be either dominated by the greater power and knowledgeable-ness of their elders, or spoilt and cosseted by the over-indulgent spoiling of mothers, or turned into household drudges.

The moral I draw is that most children ought to be brought up in boarding schools as a normal thing, and enjoy the fun of coming home for occasional holidays. I say most, but not all, for there are two exceptions.

First, the boarding-school is not every child's cup of tea. Some not only begin by being, but continue to be, miserable there.

Also it must be remembered that some boarding schools are intolerable to all children. For example, Mr. Squeers's school in 'Nicholas Nickleby,' or the school in 'Jane Eyre.' I am told that the number of these schools is fewer, and I believe it. But, thank goodness, the new Education Act provides for the public inspection of all private schools.

appointed course of study
The educational curriculum

A considerable amount of time is still spent at our schools in attempting to teach Latin and Greek to vast numbers of children.

I cannot say that I think that time is well spent. Not because I am sceptical about the value of Latin and Greek, but because I know only too well that only one in twenty of those who start them gets far enough in the study of these languages to profit by their advantages. Most of us stay bogged in the Latin grammar, even most of those who do Latin or Greek for Intermediate at the University never get to the point at which they can read them with ease. For all these the study is almost pure waste of time.

Consider my case. For the first 20 years of my life I did practically nothing else but Latin or Greek, but now I can read Latin with difficulty and Greek scarcely at all. So that even for me much of the time has been wasted. In general, then, I conclude that the game isn't worth the candle.

People say it is important to be able to read Latin and Greek prose and poetry in the original. A lot of snobbish nonsense! Classical literature is good, but it isn't half as good as ours. They say that the Greek and Roman Thucydides, Herodotus, Cicero, Livy, and Tacitus are founts of inexhaustible wisdom. Plato and Aristotle, perhaps, but they can be read just as well in translation.

The real value of dead languages is to be found not in their utility but in their difficulty. To a man who has been drilled in the classics everything else seems comparatively easy. If you can really master them when you are young, most of what comes afterwards will seem child's play, to be picked up as and when you want it and discarded as soon as you have done with it, just as to a boy who has been bored, bullied, and miserable at a public school most of the rest of his life is, by comparison, a joy ride.

Not only do the classics train and fertilise the mind, they put off to the latest possible period the moment of specialisation. That is to say, they prevent you from learning anything 'useful' until you have reached maturity, so that when you do come to the learning of what is necessary or useful, you bring to it the soil of a mind which has been prepared, fertilised and harrowed over a long period.

So, if you can surmount that difficulty, well and good, but only one in 20 can. And the other 19 would be better advised to devote to learning how their bodies work, how to garden, how to farm, how not to lose money on the Stock Exchange, how to cook, how their country is governed, the time which is now mostly spent in not learning Latin and Greek.

Take agriculture, for example. I think that every young man should learn something about the processes of agriculture. Why? Here are two reasons. The first one, from instinct. There are some things which our race has done from time immemorial for which there is an instinctive itch in the blood, so that when we do them ourselves, however inexpert we may be, and however difficult they may seem, we experience, to our surprise, an instinctive happiness.

To dig a little, to pray a little, to fight a little, to love a little, to go on the sea in ships, to draw hard breaths over spade or plough, to watch the seasons come and the blossoms set—these things bring happiness beyond all reason, and beyond all explaining.

Secondly, a reason based upon balanced living. It cannot be right to develop only one side of our being and to let the rest atrophy.

Now most of us live urban lives cut off from the sights and sounds of nature. To learn the processes of agriculture when young, and to spend some part, a week at least, of every year—but surely it should be more?—working in the country, is to redress this one-sided balance.

If I were not afraid of making laws for grown-up people for their own good, I should insist for every adult a compulsory fortnight every year working on the land. But since I *am* afraid, I shall have to vent my prejudices on the children, and insist that every child should be brought up for part of his childhood in the country and there learn to follow country ways and do country work.

To make a definite suggestion, here, let us suppose, is a big town with three or four primary schools. To that group of three or four schools let there be affiliated one school at least in the country,

within 30 miles of the town, and let one year of the child's school period be spent at the affiliated school in the country, where in addition to his ordinary education, he receives instruction in work on the land. And let this whole process be repeated when he goes to one or other of three kinds of secondary schools (11 to 16) visualised in the new Education Act.

For and against examinations

But though I believe that the educational curriculum ought in all sorts of ways to be changed, I am all for the examination system. The arguments for it are well set out in Mr. J. L. Brereton's recently published book 'The Case for Examinations.'

I am prejudiced, of course, by the fact that I always did well in examinations myself, and naturally, therefore, conclude that they are a good test of ability. But leaving myself out of account, I base the case for examinations, as in part does Mr. Brereton, on the fact of human frailty. Examinations constitute an impartial test, whereas, because of human frailty, the frailty of appointees, electors, and committees, all human tests are partial and biased.

The reason is simple. The candidate in an examination is anonymous, and the examiner, faulty as he may be—of course, examiners give widely different verdicts about candidates, and the same examiner wildly different verdicts about the same candidate at different times—at least cannot be biased because all he sees is a number, and you cannot be biased in favour of a number.

Incidentally, though this is a digression, the most astonishing coincidence that I have ever known in my life occurred in this connection.

A candidate came to complain to the Master of my college that she had been unfairly treated in the examination. She could not

believe that she deserved to fail. There must, she said, have been partiality on the part of the examiners.

'That is impossible,' said the Master, 'because all they would know of you would be a number.' The young woman looked blank. 'Well, suppose,' said the Master, 'that your number was (well, whatever it was, I cannot remember, but, anyway, a four-figure number), say, 7352. That is all the examiner would see.' ✓

'But,' said the young woman, 'that *was* my number.'

'I am taking a purely hypothetical case,' said the Master, 'and asking you merely to realise that the examiner knows nothing of you but only of a number. And I am suggesting at random that number 7352.'

At this the young woman put her hand into her pocket and brought out her registration card, and on it was the number 7352. She went away, I may add, with her worst suspicions confirmed.]

Now in any other test a personal element is introduced. You are biased in favour of a candidate at an interview because he is good looking, has charming manners, or a committee is biased because he has never offended anybody—what a lot of posts people get appointed to in this country because nobody has got anything against them! I have often thought there is no job that a man can't hold if he can only hold his tongue.

In other words, you cannot keep the personal element out of any other form of testing that can be devised. Even if you base your estimate on the reports of a boy drawn up by his master, there is always the chance that the report will be more or less favourable according as to whether the master likes or dislikes the boy.

One other point in favour of examinations is this: Work of any kind, especially brain work, is usually unpleasant and always unnatural to the human young, at least to the English young. How can they be got to do it? Answer, in four cases out of five, only by the stimulus of doing better than somebody else, being top of the form, or of getting a scholarship.

Now the test of doing better than somebody else, being top of the form, or getting a scholarship is examination. Hence, no examinations, no work, at least very little work, and no work in dull subjects!

I would like to put it on record that when people (who are taking philosophy for interest—that is to say, not taking it for examination) come to lectures by me I always have a bet with myself that they will fall away after the fifth, sixth, or seventh lecture, and so they do. It is only the prospect of an examination, the necessity of getting a degree, that induces students to bear with me, and bear with me to the end.

Teaching by correspondence

Correspondence courses can convey pretty well all that there is in education that can be learnt by rote and reproduced by memory. They are at their best in practical, concrete subjects. In so far, then, as success in examination depends upon having a good memory correspondence courses arranged either by the Army Education authorities or by private bodies will help you to get through.

In so far as education is more than this—in so far, if I may put it shortly and paradoxically, as education consists in what remains to us when we have forgotten all that we have been taught—then clearly correspondence courses can convey little education, for such education comes from the influence of intelligences superior to our own, both in the presence of and from contact with the good and stimulating teacher and from a knowledge of what great men have said and thought memorably about life.

What really matters in the training of the mind is not the accumulation of numbers of facts, but discussion. Now, the give and take between teacher and pupil in which discussion consists is one thing which no correspondence course can provide.

Universities or technical institutes?

Discussion between teacher and pupil is provided by the University, and that surely is one of its most important functions.

In this connection, I read recently two speeches about Oxford and Cambridge, one by Sir Richard Livingstone finding fault with them on the ground that they did not teach the knowledge of good and evil, and the other by Sir Stafford Cripps, saying that we wanted more and better universities in order to produce technicians to run the post-war world. I disagree with them both.

Knowledge of good and evil? Sir Richard Livingstone, I must say, does not want much for his money. No doubt it would be very nice if Oxford and Cambridge could teach us them; no doubt they ought to do so, but so ought the schools, so ought the State, so ought our 'mother's knee,' and so, above all, ought the Churches.

But they don't. Probably because they don't have the knowledge to teach, or perhaps they have and we have it too, but don't know how to act on it.

As to Sir Stafford Cripps, I'm never quite sure what a technician is; he is somebody, I take it, who knows how something works. All little boys are technicians. 'Daddy, come and look at the engines,' was the first thing my little son used to say to me whenever we got on board a steamer. Most men never grow up in the sense that they go on looking at the engines for the rest of their lives.

Now the business of Oxford and Cambridge is to produce mature intelligences. It is not vocational, the purpose of the universities is not to enable a man to earn his living, but to achieve a life worth living. Nor is it connected with the needs of the community except indirectly, in the sense that highly trained intelligences are useful to the community.

The point I am trying to make is that an education designed to bring to fruition the full potentialities of individual men or women (and this is the purpose of university education) will be an education

which for practical purposes is useless. Think of the intelligence of the tool. Now the object of the university education is to turn out the most keenly tempered and finely cut tool which sharpening and polishing can produce, a tool that can be used for almost any purpose that the owner likes to put it to.

When I went to Russia in the comparatively early days after the Russian Revolution, I met and talked to an American foreman of a factory, who held up his hands in holy horror over the wastefulness of the Russians. Apparently a highly specialised machine had been received from America for the purpose of turning out, not machines or the parts of machines, but the tools with which other machines were made. The Russians, impatient of the double process of using a machine to make tools and the tools to make machines, had short-circuited it for the direct making of machines, with the result that it had been blunted and botched and spoilt, and was no use for its own job or any other.

You don't use the needle of a pocket compass as a toothpick, or chop wood with a razor. In exactly the same way you should not use the resources of Oxford and Cambridge to turn out technicians.

Nor should university courses be speeded up, just because there happens at the moment to be five years' accumulation of students waiting to go through them. You cannot take the kingdom of knowledge by storm and a university course is not just a cheap dodge to qualify a man for a profession.

Of course, you can cram a man's mind with information to get him through examinations, with the result that he suffers from indigestion and a hatred of mental food for the rest of his life. Of course, we do the same things to turkeys and geese for Christmas—at least, we did when there were turkeys and geese—but we had the sense to kill them off and not leave them to spend the rest of their lives suffering from the result of a surfeit of overfeeding.

What is wanted are not shorter courses, but, as I have said earlier, more teachers.

The summer school

Under our present educational system, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, not all of us who can profit by a university education can afford to go to a university. For these and for others whose brains have grown rusty with disuse an admirable institution has recently grown up in our national life—the Summer School. Summer Schools are almost wholly admirable. First, because they polish up our minds. Most minds need to be kept fresh and up-to-date by periodical reconditioning.

In this respect a man's mind is like a house. It is stipulated in most leases that we should paint our houses outside every three years and inside every seven, but very few of us ever think of the necessity of doing up our minds.

There are thousands of professional men at work in this country who have not been painted inside for 30 or 40 years, with the result that their insides are damp and rotten, unhealthy for themselves and for all who come into contact with them. At a Summer School you make contact with other people's minds and let air into your own.

Secondly, there is their social value. Having to rub up against all sorts of people, you get your corners knocked off in the process. You can live in the same street with a man for 20 years and not know him, but it is astonishing with what rapidity you make new acquaintances at a Summer School.

Thirdly, there is the value of the little disciplines. I am one of those who cannot endure to be thrown for 15 or 16 hours out of every 24 defenceless on my own resources for amusement.

Now at a Summer School you attend lectures in the morning and discussions in the evening, with the result that, broadly, you have only the afternoon left for amusement. Amusement in these circumstances is ten times more amusing, precisely because it is limited. The tennis that you play, the swimming that you do, the walks that you go, the cricket in which you apprehensively take part—where

by the way, except at a Summer School, are you likely to find 21 other people to play with—the dancing in the evening up to all hours of the night when the discussions are over. . . . ?

Finally, there is the thrill of meeting famous people. I shall never forget the thrill of seeing Shaw for the first time at a Summer School, the excitement of sitting at the same table.

And there were deeper experiences too. I had the good fortune to be present at a Fabian Summer School when Shaw read to us night after night the plays of 'Back to Methuselah,' which he was writing at the time. We used to gather in the evening in the Common Room and there sat Shaw, reading with dramatic intensity that wonderful first play the scene of which is cast in the Garden of Eden.

I have seen 'Back to Methuselah' several times since then, but the effect has never been comparable to that first reading by Shaw at a Summer School.

The author revisits his old school

I should like to end these reflections on education on a personal note. Most of us at some time or other in our lives wonder wistfully what it would be like to go back to our old school. I tried the experiment recently. What were my impressions?

First of all, sense of smallness. But that is so familiar, the smallness, when you go back to them, of places that seemed enormous to you when a child, that I won't spread myself on 'smallness.' ✓

Secondly, wistfulness. I was pervaded by a delicious and wistful melancholy as I looked back upon that eager but not very nice little boy, thinking how inexperienced he was, what high hopes he had—it was nothing less than Prime Minister that I was to become—and of the disillusionments that were in store.

Thirdly, how little I knew when I left school at 18. I knew nothing of gardening, nothing of cooking, nothing of how my body

worked, nothing of sex, nothing of business, nothing of money or how to make it.

I was wholly ignorant of science; I had not even heard the names of the great literary men, Shaw, Wells, Hardy, Galsworthy, Chesterton, who were 'all the go,' and who, a year later at Oxford, were to be my gods. Yet I had been expensively educated at one of our vaunted public schools.

Then, fourthly, the reflection how impossible it would be for me to enter the world equally ill-educated now. For the school had changed out of all recognition.

The boys were taking part in normal human activities, singing, debating, acting, speaking on the wireless, travelling, going here and there about the county, having contact with adults, in other words, playing their part already as citizens of the modern world. And they seemed to me to be all the better for it. In fact, all the changes seemed to me to be for the better.

B.B.C. and Entertainments

Competitive Broadcasting?

The B.B.C.'s charter is to come before Parliament for renewal in 1946, and already much has been said on the future of broadcasting in this country. Broadly speaking, there are two main lines of opinion; those who advocate the renewal of the Charter and with it the continuance of the B.B.C.'s monopoly of the air, and those who want to see several competing systems, of which the B.B.C. may still continue to be one.

I take the second view. In substance we concede the case for free and competitive broadcasting when we insist upon a free Press. A free Press means that there should be a number of papers expressing different points of view, advocating different creeds and causes, appealing to the public in different ways for different measures, expressing and catering for different interests, and that the public should be enabled to choose between them.

A free Press is a condition of variety, of health, and, may I add, of gaiety and interest in public life. Where you have a controlled Press, a mere mouthpiece of the Government, in which only one point of view is expressed, it becomes an epitome of dullness. Look, for example, at the Nazi *Angriff*! And I have to learn that even the Communist *Pravda* sends a rush of new and independent ideas to the head. Further, freedom of opinion and conflict of opinion are the conditions both of the discovery of truth and the defence of right, for how am I to know what is true and what is right

if I only hear one side of the case? They are also the conditions of political health, for how is the Government to remain efficient and just if nobody is to criticise it?

If these principles are true of the written word – and democracy rests upon the assumption they are – why should they be untrue in regard to the spoken word? Wherein is the difference of principle to be found? It is said that competing radio stations would be financed by commercial interests which would use the air as a medium for the advertisement for their products. But if advertisements are objected to, then, once again, we must abolish the free Press which lives by advertisements.

Personally, I dislike advertisements, but if in spite of them, if because of them, I can get more and better music, more varied and bolder talks, more expression of minority points of view than under a single State system, then I am quite prepared to put up with the necessity of listening for one minute at the end of the concert to the virtues of somebody's tooth-paste or breakfast food, or aspirin. And if I am not, I can turn the damned thing off. If I am to be given a richer and more varied assortment of goods for the mind to make me think, of goods for the spirit to make me see and hear where I was blind and deaf to them before, of entertainment to make me laugh, under a free system than under a monopoly system, I opt every time for the free system.

The trouble about the B.B.C. is not so much that it is unfair as that it is safe, and to be safe is to be dull. It dare not take risks for fear of paining old women of both sexes living in cathedral towns, and it is unduly dominated by the gods of the established order, especially that god of the established order which is the Church.

Only one human being in ten in this country has any active connection with the Church or shows any interest in organised religion, yet the amount of time given to religious talks on the wireless would be justified by a proportion not of one, but of nine in ten, while the wretched Rationalists, who believe in being good without God.

can secure no share of the air for the propagation of their point of view.

It is instructive to compare the almost explosive boldness of the questions which are asked by soldiers at Army Brains Trusts with the mild seemliness of those which we are permitted to answer when we are speaking over the officialised B.B.C. air. So it is as an opponent of monopolies of all kinds that I want free and competitive broadcasting.

The Brains Trust

If I am about, mention of broadcasting or the B.B.C. sooner or later brings up the Brains Trust. It began, some of my readers may remember, in January, 1941, has been going ever since, and seems to have settled down into a regular feature of broadcasting.

Why was this new venture such a remarkable success, and why has it been imitated throughout the length and breadth of the country, so that barely a day passes without half a dozen Brains Trusts on something or other being held somewhere or other in these islands? Why? Primarily, I think, because it has introduced a new technique, and until the novelty has worn off, which in the case of the British public will take years, people will continue to attend Brains Trusts in the belief that they are going to something tremendously up to date. Thus, if five men successively make speeches at a meeting it will be half full. If they call the meeting a Brains Trust and talk not in speeches at the audience but in sentences to one another there will be a queue stretching a hundred yards down the road of people trying to get in.

Most of the reasons for this are by now pretty familiar. People like to observe the interplay of personalities; they like to hear different views on the same topic; they like to hear persons whose names are known to them chipping and chaffing each other, and

there is always the delightful possibility of a row. Most important of all is the fun of seeing in the flesh someone who has hitherto only been a disembodied voice. As a farmer's wife said not long ago, 'I can't get used to hearing your voice coming out of your face instead of out of my wireless set.'

But is it properly to be classed as 'entertainment'? I think not, and find the use of the word in connection with the Brains Trust as partly misleading and partly insulting. You see, it *does* depend on what you mean by entertainment. The notion of entertainment which exists in most people's minds degrades a session of the Brains Trust to the level of performing dogs, tap dancers, and the teeth and legs of film stars. It implies what I think is false, namely, that the only things which people find worth doing or hearing are those which entertain them.

I would say, broadly (1) that people need to use their minds which otherwise get rusty; (2) that using your mind, like using any other limb or faculty, is pleasant; (3) that nevertheless, it is wrong to say that the purpose of using your mind is to get pleasure, just as it is wrong to say that the purpose of digging in a garden is to grow vegetables, and the purpose of using your mind is to find out what is the case; in other words, what you think to be the truth. Both digging and discussing are pleasant, but that is not why we do them. Like most activities worth while, thinking and discussing need no justification.

I said above that the Brains Trust had been going strong ever since 1941. This is not strictly correct, for it is usually suspended for two or three months during the summer. A good arrangement, this, good for both parties, the Brains Trusters and the listeners, on the general principle that a little bit of change won't do anybody any harm.

On the same principle, I believe that one of the recipes for a happy marriage is occasional separate holidays. One gets tired of the same face; one gets tired of the same voice; and, above all, one gets tired of the same limited stock of ideas. One sees other people

on one's separate holiday, one enlarges one's own vitality by cross-fertilisation with other minds, and one returns a fresher and brighter, rejuvenated person to find a fresh, bright, rejuvenated husband, or a fresh, bright, and rejuvenated wife. And really, you know, after the people one meets on holiday, how surprisingly delightful one's husband or one's wife, by contrast, sometimes is!

Now, what is true of the relation between man and wife is true of the relation between the Brains Trust and the public. When we have had a little change from you, we shall come back all the fresher, I will not say the wiser, to the answering of your questions. The difficult ones will not seem so difficult, or the silly ones so silly. As, for you, when you have had a change from us and listened to other people all the summer, you may perhaps be brought to concede that by contrast we are not either so boring or so wrong-headed as you may think.

Meanwhile, let it be remembered that the origin and purpose of the Brains Trust were to give a certain amount of information—may I add, even to attempt a little education—for those poor bored chaps scattered in lonely searchlight and Ack-Ack units up and down the country, whose time hung so heavily on their hands.

Popular music

From time to time, the B.B.C. publishes requests to dance band leaders and music publishers that future broadcast dance music should be less 'sugary' and more 'virile.' Admirable, but how difficult to realise the B.B.C.'s desire!

They say they don't mind sincere sentimentality, but dislike sentiment when it's sugary. What is the difference, and how do you distinguish one from the other?

For my part, I hate all sentimentality. It lowers and depresses the spirit. One objects to it also because it is a cheat, a counterfeit

emotion. People who hate their mothers dissolve into ecstasies of delicious woefulness over 'mother love' in songs, and those for whom the country means unmitigated boredom melt with fake emotions at the prospect (again in songs) of cottages with roses over the door.

Disliking all sentimentality, I have little to contribute to the elucidation of the B.B.C.'s distinction; but one or two things of interest came out in the discussion. The dance band leader Ambrose said that nine-tenths of his music came from America, so he wanted to know whether he was to send over instructions for less slush. The confession confirms my worst suspicions.

What sort of a country are we become that we cannot produce even our own popular music? Another dance band leader said that diners liked their music sweet and low. To mix music with food is to spoil two good things. If a man's being is centred, as it should be, in his palate and stomach, he has no time to spare for his ears. Alternatively, if the music is worth listening to, it wants his whole attention; it should not be distracted by the watering of the salivary glands.

One other point. When we produced our own popular music we did produce songs that could be sung and whistled, which were, in fact, on everybody's lips. We had such songs through the Victorian age—where, by the way, is a song to be found to-day with the lilt of 'I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside'?—and each of the wars that have taken place in my lifetime produced its own first-rate popular music. 'Good-bye, my Bluebell,' we used to sing in the Boer War. Sentimental, no doubt, but it was a rattling good song and it went with a swing. The last war produced 'Tipperary' and 'Keep the Home Fires Burning.' The latter was sentimental but had lilt and rhythm, and, sung in unison by a company of marching men, it raised the spirits, gave them a feeling of solidarity, and took tired men over the last stretches of a hard road.

I cannot believe that the contemporary slush, nine-tenths of which we are told comes out of America, has any comparable effect. It has produced a world in which people have forgotten how to sing purely

because there are no popular tunes for them to sing. It is a world in which no errand-boys whistle. If what the B.B.C. means is that we are to have songs again with rhythm and lilt, songs that can be remembered and roared in chorus, then, however sentimental their words, the change is wholly to be welcomed.

But this crooning deposit of sickly musical slime that oozes into one's ears seems to me one of the most degrading manifestations of the spirit of people at war. It does not hearten, it does not enlighten, it is not good for morale, on the contrary it lowers, and depresses, saps a man's moral fibre, reduces vitality, and degrades his musical taste.

A State theatre

One event, at least, of great importance, in the field of entertainment has occurred during the War—Britain's first State Theatre has been opened at Bristol. Now, I am all in favour of a State Theatre, State subsidised opera, a State orchestra, State subsidised ballet, and a State cinema, hence I regard the Bristol theatre as a step in the right direction.

Deprived of a State theatre, we have to fall back on the commercial theatre in which the primary object of every management must be to make money, from which it follows that a management can only venture to put on those plays which it believes will pay. Broadly, the public will only pay to see what it is used to, and what it believes it will enjoy. Now, great and original art is rarely at first enjoyable; and it is almost always shocking to the accepted ideas of the great majority of people, precisely because, in so far as it *is* great and original art, it represents an advance upon them.

Look at the reception which was accorded to the plays of Ibsen and Shaw. What a spate of abuse was heaped upon the head of Ibsen when he dealt with venereal disease in 'Ghosts'; and of Shaw

when he put the problem of prostitution on the stage in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession.' It is only a theatre subsidised by the State which can afford to put on original plays which are not yet commercial propositions, precisely because the great playwright must first form the taste for which he then proceeds to cater.

Every great civilisation in the past has thought fit to provide monuments, theatres, palaces, public buildings, great halls, parks, squares, and gardens as a memento by which subsequent ages might remember its glory and pay tribute to its taste. Our civilisation is almost alone in insisting on judging everything by the single standard of immediate profit.

A great many towns of this country have not even a decent hall from which a man can speak, or a theatre in which a play can be put on, with the result that I imagine most of the inhabitants of 20th-Century England have never seen flesh and blood actors in a living play. Consequently, we have to start equipping from the beginning the material environment in which alone the arts can flourish, providing out of public funds the halls, the theatres, and the State repertory companies and orchestras which the 19th-Century State deemed outside its province.

Mystery plays

Look at the record of the ordinary commercial theatres in London during the war—a succession of thrillers and murder mysteries. And all these, you must remember, have been big box-office successes, which leads to the question why theatregoers enjoy these second-hand thrills, when the war provides thrills and horrors enough to gratify everyone's taste.

Why in fact do we enjoy tragedy at all? Aristotle held the theory that tragedy purges us of pity and horror. He thinks of human beings as well-springs of emotion whose waters are continuous.¹

accumulating. If we live dull and placid lives there are no ducts or conduits to draw the waters off and we become, as so many women do, nervous, hysterical, and subject to emotional storms over nothing, because we have no proper outlet for our surplus emotions. Or we become over-pitiful, feeling everybody's toothaches as if they were our own. Hence the necessity of an outlet for our emotions which will otherwise incommode us by their own surfeit. Tragedy and melodrama provide it. On the stage we see the violence which our own lives mercifully lack, and, feeling horror at the crime and pity for the victim, are disembarassed of the overplus of horror-stricken and pitiful emotions which are welling up within us. Tragedy, then, is the drawer-off of surplus feeling. It is a pill for the emotionally constipated, and the subsequent relief when the purge is over is, in part, the explanation of the satisfaction that we experience from it.

But this, of course, is an explanation of the hold which horror has at all times upon nice, peaceful, order-loving people who, as they say, would not hurt a fly. It does not explain its *special* hold in war-time.

There are two possible explanations for this. The first, that we grow callous to horrors. Of all human faculties cruelty and the capacity for violence grow the most rapidly with what they feed on. I can remember how, in the last war, God-fearing vegetarians who would go out of their way to avoid passing a butcher's shop were, after a few weeks' training, cheerfully sticking their bayonets into the stomachs of Germans and giving a turn to them when they got them in. In this sense, violence is like a drug; the more of it we have, the more we want, and life comes to seem anæmic without it. The world is full of it to-day, and so we demand it on the stage.

Then there is another thing. We all of us have a streak of sadism—pleasure in the sufferings of others—somewhere in our make-up. We are interested and curious about pain and suffering. Horror gives us a thrill. Look at the popularity of the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's wax works. Consider the vogue of books on

torture or flogging. And now the world is full of violence. Most of those who flock to see murder plays have been mercifully immune from it. And in their secret souls they feel they have been done out of something. They are curious about this something. 'Let us go and see for ourselves,' they say, 'what this hurting and wounding and destroying of human beings is like.'

And as they go to see killings and tragedies because they don't want to be wholly left out of this, the major activity of our times.

“ Shows ” and “ Cultural ” entertainments

Another wartime innovation by the State is the concession to the theatre to forgo entertainment tax on what are known broadly as 'cultural' plays. Excellent, as far as it goes, but immediately it raises the question, what is a 'show' and what is a 'cultural' play. For example, a controversy on the status of Congreve's 'Love for Love' has arisen in the columns of the press.

The question, of course, is a difficult one. The broad distinction, I think, is that a cultural show is one that affects, however slightly, one's own life. Look at the question from the point of view of reading. What is the point of reading unless something comes of it? You would be better advised to play Ludo. What is the sense of reading biography or history unless it affects your life and action in the present? What is the point of reading poetry and novels, unless as a result you see more beauty, more passion, more scope for your sympathy and understanding in life than you saw before?

If a book excites thought, enlarges the sense of beauty, the sense of pity, or the sense of sympathy; if it helps us towards the understanding of our fellow creatures; if it throws light on dark and difficult problems; if it awakens the conscience; if it gives us a higher conception of our duty or our job, or an insight into personal relations— if it accomplishes any of these things, then it has affected our lives

and characters, and I should describe it as cultural. If we take to reading as we take to chocolates or chewing gum, to pass an idle ten minutes or to give us a laugh or a thrill, then it has no effect, beyond the laugh, the thrill (or the yawn), and is not cultural.

The same principle applies to 'shows' and entertainments. Here is a good practical test. If you come away from a farce or a revue through which you have laughed for a couple of hours, you have a sense of emptiness and futility. How dull and heavy the ordinary world seems, and what on earth is one to say to one's companion? Similarly, when you have been to a lush sentimental drama or a sensational melodrama, you come away drained of emotion, and the world outside seems dull, trivial, and boring. How humdrum life seems, how ordinary the people; you can scarcely bear the faces opposite you in the Tube. In a word, you are emptied, not filled.

But if you come away from a concert of great music, you are filled, either exhilarated or strangely moved, or perhaps merely tranquil and serene. After seeing great drama, Shakespeare for example, the world seems to you a more interesting and exciting place, precisely because Shakespeare has shown you possibilities in life which you did not realise before. Come away from a Shaw play and, if you are me, your mind is buzzing with ideas like a hive with bees, and you find yourself talking nineteen to the dozen in a sort of intoxication of intellectual excitement.

The music, the Shakespeare, the Shaw, have enlarged and enriched one and are cultural. The farce, the lush sentimental play, the sensational melodrama have emptied and drained one and taken the colour out of ordinary life; they are not cultural.

Censorship and the film

I discuss the question of censorship in literature in another chapter. But I would like to mention here one instance of censorship which

struck me as particularly stupid—the censoring in America of swear words in Noel Coward's great film 'In Which We Serve.' It is another example of the folly of trying to improve people's morals by prohibition.

How hypocritical the decision is! American films make gods of lust and violence, and combine to suggest that toughness in man and sexual attractiveness in woman are the sum total of human aspiration, with the exception of occasional lapses into sentimentality in relation to mothers and kids. And why do Americans tolerate an old-maidish squeamishness which refuses to allow the ears of a hard-swearing audience to be affronted with 'hells' and 'damns' and withholds from tough citizens of the U.S.A. the knowledge that English sailors talk of 'bastards.'

Restriction produces precisely the opposite to what was intended. When Americans were prevented from drinking by Prohibition they drank more liquor and worse liquor than Frenchmen, who were subject to no restriction. American States, which are hag-ridden with puritanical laws, have long been remarkable for the indecency of their literature and the pornography of their private stage shows. The degree to which women's bodies are bared upon the stage is usually in inverse proportion to the degree in which in ordinary life they are covered.

Sunday entertainments

I object to the banning of almost anything for any reason, to the banning of swear words, of so-called obscene books, of the opening of cinemas on Sunday, simply because I don't think that any section of the community has the right to impose its views in such matters upon any other section by denying them avenues of access to the pleasures they happen to like which do no harm to other people.

Take the Sunday opening of cinemas. Note that the question

would not have arisen unless cinemas had first been closed on Sundays. Now why should they be? Presumably because the churches object.

Are the churches, then, so terrified at the prospect of competition and so little able to stand up for themselves in a fair field and no favour that they must seek to compel people to attend them by making it impossible for them to go anywhere else? Of how much religious value, I wonder, is the attendance at church of a man who attends not on merits but because there is nowhere else for him to go?

To realise the enormity of this attitude, let us put it the other way round.

Imagine I am a cinema proprietor, objecting to the churches being opened on Sunday because, presumably, if they are, fewer people will go to the cinemas. Or perhaps, as a cinema-goer, I object, when making my own way to the cinema, to encountering the gloomy looks and disapproving gaze of the church-goers. And so I demand that the churches should be closed. It is easy to realise the tyranny implied by such a demand; not so easy apparently to see it when the boot is on the other foot. Nobody, after all, is compelling people to attend the cinemas who don't want to attend them. I am totally at a loss to know on what grounds those who do want to should be frustrated merely because other people don't share their tastes.

I should extend this argument to all forms of entertainment, including racing and football, always provided, of course, that the form of entertainment was one which did not involve cruelty or suffering to somebody or some being. It would not apply, to, say, cock-fighting, if it were demonstrated that cock-fighting involved suffering to cocks, or to exhibitions of performing animals.

Let us get rid of this notion, that we have the truth so much in us that we are entitled to deny other people the right to live the life that seems good to them, or that we can make people better by

prohibitions and regulations. There is a sort of gloomy folk in this world who never call a pleasure a pleasure when they can call it a sin. It is they who seek to shut the cinemas.

Punch and Judy Shows

To conclude with one of our oldest forms of entertainment—the Punch and Judy Show, still enjoyed annually by millions of visitors to fairs and seaside resorts, I am all in favour of Punch and Judy shows. They always give me intense pleasure, and I am only sorry that with the fierce competition of mass-produced mechanical entertainment they grow rarer and rarer.

Why do I enjoy them so much? The pleasure, I think, is partly of the same kind as that which I used to enjoy in the early Chaplin films or in the Marx Bros. films—the pleasure of seeing things knocked about and broken; the pleasure, in fact in harmless destruction.

A deeper source, perhaps, of one's delight is the gorgeously successful immorality of Punch—his disrespect for women, his outrageous treatment of his wife, his addiction to wholesale robbery, violence, and murder. How he does get away with it all! The only person he can't 'do in' is the clown, who is one degree more irresponsible than Punch himself.

One's pleasure in all this? The pleasure obviously of seeing all the accepted proprieties which part of one unconsciously resents, set at naught; not to speak of the accepted authorities—the policeman, the official, the big-wig, and the snob, who, in ordinary life throw their weight about and get too big for their boots—and the pleasure of seeing them taken down and made fun of.

And then I am for ever astonished at the cleverness of the man who manages the puppets. Finally, I think I am delighted at the

regular routine which is almost a ceremony, and is never departed from by a hair's breadth.

One of the best ghost stories I know, by M. R. James, describes how somebody watching a Punch and Judy show deduced that something odd was happening by the fact that Punch and the rest were not going through their accustomed routine.

The something 'odd' was a ghost who had somehow got into the oblong canvas enclosure which is topped by the Punch and Judy stage.

Presently the operator, with staring eyes and hair on end, emerges and dashes away. Then the whole contraption gets up on its own legs and dashes away after him. An admirable story!

Culture

Art and the spirit of man

I was once asked on the Brains Trust the question 'What is civilisation?', and protested that it was absurd to try to answer such a question in half a minute. It is equally absurd for the reader to expect a definition of civilisation here in the course of a few paragraphs, especially when there are so many false ideas as to what civilisation is to be cleared away, as for example, the view that you can assess it in terms of technical gadgets and material comforts, efficient sanitary engineering, motor-cars, aeroplanes, battleships, or what-not.

Civilisation, it seems to me, is bound up with the development of those qualities and the practice of those activities which distinguish us from the animals. Strength, toughness, loyalty, endurance, diligence, courage, uniformity, discipline—all these things may or may not be admirable, but they are not civilisation; for in respect of each of them we are outdone by one or other of the animals. Whales are larger, elephants tougher, deer swifter, rabbits more fertile, nightingales more melodious, beavers more diligent, sheep more herdlike, while the ants run the corporate State much better than any Fascist. What, then, are the things in which we are distinguished from the animal creation? They are three: Our reason, our perception of the difference between right and wrong, our sense of beauty.

Our sense of beauty has received many violent shocks during the

war. Great and lovely buildings have been ravaged beyond repair. Do you remember the controversy which raged over the bombing of the Monastery of Monte Cassino and the statement by somebody—lots of people said this sort of thing—that ‘man is greater than his art’? Does it mean anything to say this? I suggest that it doesn’t, for clearly men and art are incomparable. There is no common standard of measurement. You cannot, for example, compare a wave with a heap of gold, a paving-stone with a wish, or a Shakespeare sonnet with a lump of coal. Each member of these pairs of opposites belongs to a different world and demands a different scale or standard of measurement. Who, for example, would take a foot-rule to measure the taste of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding?

Of course, if you think that man is the *creator* of art, then the creator is greater than what he creates, and the question is answered. But supposing you believe, as I do, that the great artist does not so much create as discover; that he differs from you or me in having a superior vision, in virtue of which he penetrates through the appearances of things to the reality that underlies them, so that when he composes or writes, or paints, or builds, he makes images of that reality, images in which there is thrown, as it were, into high relief the factor of beauty which underlies the appearances of familiar things, so that presently you and I, coming with our duller vision to works of art, to hear Beethoven, to see Botticelli, or to read Shakespeare, are able to see for ourselves what the artist first saw and by virtue of his keener vision clarified and purified so that presently even we could see it too.

Supposing you believe all this, then the artist is not the creator but the midwife who brings to birth in paint, or stone, or steel, or film, or sound, something which his vision has been able to grasp. If you believe this, then the work of art, the image in matter of the beauty of a different and more real world, is greater than the midwife who has brought beauty to birth in it.

One other point. Those who were in favour of bombing the Monastery of Monte Cassino said, quite justly, that human lives were more important than dead things. But is this the beginning and end of the matter? May not one say that the dead things are valuable precisely because of their effect upon human lives; that works of art ennoble and refine our vision, enabling us to see in the world more beauty, more passion, more scope for our sympathy and understanding than we could have seen unaided?

Suppose for a moment that this is true. Then when we destroy a work of beauty that has come down to us from the past, we are depriving our posterity of precisely those influences of ennoblement and refinement of which it is the source. Posterity, then, will be the poorer because of this deprivation.

Hence it is not so much a contrast between dead work of art and the living man as a contrast between the lives which are to be lived by our children in a world bereft of beauty and between the lives of human beings living now.

The 'value' of beauty

It is difficult to describe the value of beauty in words, especially to readers in an age like ours which is governed by the stomach and pocket view of life, and finds difficulty in accepting the view that any thing or any activity that neither fills the one nor enriches the other can have concrete value. Moreover, the efforts of beauty are indirect rather than direct. If you read Plato's 'Republic' you will find an interesting passage on the effects of environment on the soul. A graceful and harmonious environment produces harmonious souls, at peace both with themselves and with the world about them; an ugly and inharmonious environment produces crude and ugly souls, at war with themselves and the world that has made them what they are.

Most of the great civilisations of the past, perceiving this truth, have thought fit to erect, at public cost, magnificent monuments and buildings to the glory of God and for the delight of citizens. Thus, there have been the Colossus at Rhodes, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages. We ourselves in this country once shared this view. We too believed that lovely buildings and well planned towns enhanced the value of a civilisation and the dignity of its citizens, and our ancestors built Ludlow, Oxford, and Bath. One of the most humiliating reflections for English men and women living to-day is that whatever is beautiful and lovely in England was built by an age that is past. Go to an old city; go for example to Oxford. The core is lovely, but old, the scurf of modern buildings and factories with which the core is surrounded is commonplace, vulgar, and new.

Our age cannot create beauty. But at least it should respect and preserve the beauty that has come down to it from the past. It should, but it does not. I remember once going to visit Chartres Cathedral, about 40 miles to the south-west of Paris, perhaps the loveliest of all the monuments in which the Middle Ages enshrined their belief in the goodness and majesty of God, and erected as a vehicle for the piety of man. Close by there was an aërodrome, and on the afternoon of my visit aeroplanes in training were flying in tiers around the two towers of the cathedral, mocking, with their violence and their noise, the serene beauty which had come down to us from the past. The spectacle seemed to me to convey its moral: the aeroplane, the typical product of our age, is a symbol of the violence, the noise, and the power of the twentieth century. Chartres Cathedral, of the beauty and the piety of the twelfth.

I walked along the Strand the other day. Right in the middle of the roadway stand two churches, St. Clement Danes and St. Mary-le-Strand, their graceful proportions giving its sole touch of beauty to that otherwise hideously undistinguished thoroughfare. And, indeed, they were very lovely, as the sky flushed with sunset showed

through the slits in the belfries and threw into high relief against the glow the beautiful lines which distinguish Wren's work. How beautiful, but, at the same time, what a damned nuisance, standing there right in the middle of the road, dividing the traffic, causing blocks, diminishing speed, and, for all I know, even causing accidents.

So far we have let them stand, and it was left to Hitler to destroy part of one of them; but if the present rage against beauty* continues, I imagine that in a hundred years they will have gone the way of other sacrifices of beauty on the altar of utility.

What is utility? Or rather, since utility is something useful, let us ask: Useful for what? Presumably for money, or power, or efficiency, or speed. Money, then, to buy what; power, then, to do what; efficiency in the performance of what processes and for what ends; speed in order to go more quickly whither?

I ask these questions in order to throw into relief the fact that utility is only a means, a means to something beyond itself, a something which is signified by the words 'what' and 'whither,' something which is desirable in itself. What are these things which are desirable in themselves? Well, among them, I suppose, we must include beauty, since one of the answers to the question, 'Money for what?' is 'To enable rich men to acquire beautiful old country houses, to buy objects of art, to collect pictures, to keep tame orchestras.'

It is symptomatic of our age that in its preoccupation with means it should forget the ends which the means are useful to promote. I would do anything to preserve that which is individual and distinguished in a world which increasingly becomes alike, so much so that within a hundred years we shall have the same uniform civilisation with the same shops, the same cars, the same advertisements, the same tinned foods, the same toothpaste, the same beer, the same thoughts, and the same girls, stretching from Balham to Bagdad.

Hence, when Hitler attacked our cities, when we ourselves destroy the heritage of beauty that has come down to us from the past with

plans for reconstructing Boulter's Lock or the Regency terraces at Hove, something is lost which we have not the power to replace. Our minds do not know that such things are valuable; our spirits are unable to create the beauty which our minds do not value. An England without Bath and Ludlow and Oxford, an England, therefore, of garages and petrol pumps and garden cities and suburbs and arterial roads and advertisements and neon lights, will be an England which nobody will value, and nobody will care for, because it contributes nothing that is valuable or lovable to the lives of its citizens.

The capacity to create and to recognise beauty is one of the things that set men apart from and above the animals. Our civilisation seems at times to be rapidly reverting to an animal level, and if we and Hitler succeed between us in destroying whatever has made England beautiful in the past our chances of rising above that level in the future and building some kind of civilisation that rises above what I began by calling the stomach and pocket view of life will be seriously impaired.

And why, somebody has asked, spend £3,250 for a Hogarth painting for the National Gallery?

Why anything in war time except war? Why should girls be beautiful and spend money on cosmetics? Why should men be jolly and spend money on beer? Why spend money on going to the theatre or the movies or the football match? Again, life can be maintained by a handful of rice a day. Why spend money on asparagus (when you can get it) and onions?

The answer surely is obvious—that there is more in life and more to life than mere survival. How you live, what you live for, the quality of your living is more important than the fact that you are alive. If some lives were not better than others, there would be no point in fighting. Incidentally, art is one of the things for which we were fighting. For art springs from the freedom of the spirit, and cannot be made to march in step to the orders of the State.

'So long as we have any neutral non-political art in Germany,' said that ass Goebbels, 'our task is not done.' Well, one of the things we are fighting for is the integrity, the neutrality, the 'non-politicality,' if I may coin the word, of art.

No worth-while art can ever be produced to order. It is no use calling upon the Poet Laureate or the Master of the King's Musick to write an ode or a symphony in celebration of this or that, and expecting such a production to be great art.

The arts are the flowers of the spirit, and, like flowers, can bloom only in a favouring environment which permits the spirit to blow where it listeth. It is, perhaps, unfortunate they cannot be made to bloom for the occasion, to be fragrant by an Act of Parliament. It is none the less true. You can threaten to punish a poet if he does not turn out a sonnet, and you will get your sonnets. But you won't get good sonnets.

The interested reader would be well advised to look up the section entitled 'State Poems' in that original anthology of poetry to be found in the 'Week-end Book.' Some are awful; some are funny; most are just dull.

Music to-day

The real trouble about art to-day is that we have forgotten how to make it for ourselves. Few sketch or paint in water-colours. Or take music. Isn't it time that we started making music for ourselves again, before we have completely forgotten how to do it?

Even the pleasures of such a humble form of music-making as community singing are sometimes denied to us. A vicar recently told his parishioners: 'If you can't sing in tune, it is better not to attempt to sing at all.' The vicar, I suppose, has an acutely sensitive ear; he can't bear untuneful sounds. But it is important to make a distinction between being untuneful and being out of tune.

Most people can sing in tune, yet it cannot be said that the sound they make is very tuneful.

The human voice, after all, is not a very effective instrument. For every dozen good pianists there is only one good singer, and it is far harder to achieve in the use of the voice a degree of competence at which you can give pleasure to other people than it is in the use of an instrument. So don't let us expect too much in the way of good singing.

But the fact that the noise we make is not very pleasing is no reason for not making it. On the contrary, the pleasure of self-expression is so great that, in so far as they have displaced even the feeblest singing at the piano, the gramophone and the radio must be counted dead losses. Increasingly, alas! we delegate to machines the function of living.

We no longer walk, we ride; we no longer climb stairs, we go up in the lift; we no longer converse, we turn on the radio; we no longer sing, we put on a record. And so we miss the pleasures of self-expression and the pleasures of co-operative effort, and miss, above all, the pleasure of co-operative self-expression, which is the pleasure of community singing.

Similarly, in church you have a greater sense of participation in the service; you are much more alert and less likely to go to sleep if you sing with the rest than if you regard yourself as a distant spectator of an aloof spectacle carried on before an altar in the dim recesses of a vast building, however beautiful the singing which accompanies the spectacle.

Music cooked and raw

There is nothing to prevent people from listening to the classics. I forget how many hours a week the B.B.C. devotes to the broadcasting of classical music. but they are far more numerous than one

would suppose, and, if enough people wanted to hear it, they would become more numerous still. Apart from the B.B.C. there have never been so many facilities in the way of concerts, not to speak of gramophones and pianolas, for making contact with good music.

Yet, despite these opportunities for hearing classical music as it was written, there is at the moment a glut of 'potted' versions of the classics. Beethoven is condensed into the 'V Symphony'; a Mozart piano sonata forms the theme of a tinkly dance tune; Tchaikovsky becomes the 'Concerto for Two.' The danger of the present 'mutilation system' is that it enables lazy people to think that the vulgarised, pepped-up version of great music is all that great music is, and that when they are 'enjoying it' it they are 'enjoying' the classics.

Now there is a snob value about the classics which makes people like to think that they are capable of enjoying them. The truth is, of course, that the enjoyment of what is great is not to be had on such cheap and easy terms. To listen to great music requires a certain amount of training and practice and effort; it requires a keen mind and a fresh spirit; and a willingness to put up with a certain amount of boredom in the hope of compensation afterwards.

For 30 years I have played the pianola. You must know that pianola manufacturers had the habit of putting two pieces on the same roll, or two or three movements of a Sonata or Suite on the same roll. I would get the roll because, let us say, of my passionate eagerness to hear the third movement, and would bitterly resent the necessity of playing through the first and the second movement before I got to it. How boring they seemed, how I hurried through them. How I wondered that Bach, who could write with such intoxicating gaiety, could drag me through such dreary wastes of dullness! And then by dint of oft-repeated playing the dull first and second movements gradually became less dull, gradually began to overtake in attractiveness the at first so readily enjoyed third

movement, until now it is only for them, the once despised bores, that the roll is played at all.

As with movements, so with composers. I began with Chopin. He was easy and appealing, and his wistful melancholy was just the right cup of musical tea for a young man who believed his heart to have been broken. There followed the early sonatas of Beethoven; but it was only later and after many weary and sleeping hours that I came to like the works of Beethoven's last period. Similarly, Handel came quickly and easily; Bach only after much weariness of the musical flesh. In fact, Mozart is the only exception I know to the rule that if you like a piece of music right away it cannot be much good, and conversely, if I may commit an Irishism, that no first-rate music should ever be heard for the first time.

Now, mutilated classics blind people to all these truths, and persuade them to accept a lower and less intense enjoyment for a higher and more intense, and, incidentally, to live life on a lower level than they could do precisely because they fob them off with an inferior article in the belief that the superior is either outside their reach or not worth having.

Jazz and music

Incidentally, what a light this resort to the classics throws upon the poverty of inspiration of modern jazz and swing music. It is one more piece of evidence to show that the introduction of jazz has killed English popular songs. While the songs of the first World War are remembered—I often hear people humming and whistling them—the songs of the present war—they are not really songs at all, but vocal treacle—heard though they are over thousands of microphones, are forgotten almost as soon as they appear. Symptomatic, wasn't it, that at the Albert Hall festival of 'Seventy Years of Song' the audience joined readily in the Victorian and Edwardian songs,

were induced to sing, under the leadership of Violet Loraine and George Robey, the songs of the last war, but fell into a gloomy silence when we came to the era of dance bands, of jazz, of crooning and of swing.

Why? One reason, I suppose, is that we have ceased to supply our music for ourselves. The inspiration that goes into English popular music to-day isn't English.

In the world in which I grew up we were bombarded with popular songs. Each of them had a distinctive tune. But now we have moved into a world in which, broadly speaking, there are no popular songs, with the result that there is nothing to remember, nothing to sing, nothing to whistle. The unfortunate errand-boys of this generation are the first to be born into a world in which errand-boys have nothing to whistle.

This war, then, will be remembered because it is one great crisis of our time which produced no popular music to celebrate it.

It is because I care for music, that I always hesitate to give the obvious answer to the perennial question 'Which do you think is the greater handicap in life—blindness or deafness?'

When I am listening to Mozart or Bach—I hope the gushing avowal won't put readers against me—I am sometimes so ravished that I think this is the most wonderful experience that life holds, and putting to myself this very question, insist that I would sooner a hundred times lose my eyes than my ears.

If I lost my eyes, I say, I could still read, thinking of the admirable work done by St. Dunstan's, and the great library of the books that there are printed in Braille; but if I lost my hearing, then all this beauty of music would be gone from me. And I say, further, if all men, including myself, were blind, the amount of harm we could do in the world would be enormously diminished. We could not fly planes, drop bombs, or aim rifles, so that there would be a substantial credit side to universal blindness.

Would there be a credit side to deafness? Only that we should be

spared the radio of the next flat and the oilier conversation of our friends; but then we can always follow Herbert Spencer's example and go about with a pair of ear flaps in our pockets, and, when the conversation becomes sillier than usual, put them on and shut it out. And so I go on justifying myself to myself. And yet I know in my heart that all these reasons, so far from proving the case they are designed to support, prove just the opposite.

Dr. Johnson says somewhere that all the arguments which are used to show that poverty is no evil show it, in fact, to be a very great evil. Nobody, he points out, strives to prove to you that you can be happy on £10,000 a year.

Similarly, nobody strives to show you that you would be better off without ears than you would be without eyes. And we don't find it necessary to invent arguments for the greater value of eyes, because we take it for granted, thinking of the loveliness of nature that, eyeless, we should miss, and the faces of our friends and those we love.

An English and a Russian novelist

In literature as in music, I am a conservative. For me, the same gods have occupied the same pedestals since 1912, and I confess without any sense of shame that most modern literature makes little appeal to me. I admire the virtuosity of some modern writers, but I find so often that they are more interested in technique and in new forms of expression than in the story they tell or the ideas they expound.

One author, above all others, I have been reading during the last months of the war—Anthony Trollope. If you can once develop a taste for him, he is the best investment in the literary stock-market, since he wrote enough novels to last you for the rest of your life—nearly 60 of them—all good and most first-rate. These novels are

especially attractive to people living in the present time, because of the enormous sense of security, solidity, comfort, and confidence with which they are pervaded. It is a jostling, vigorous world to which Trollope introduces you, full of colour and incident, through which move real, live people, so alive and kicking that if you were to meet Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope or Archdeacon Grantley in the street, you would recognise them on the instant.

Trollope is the most English writer in all our literature. No ideas, very much, to disturb you; no challenging of conventions to shock the sensibilities; no profound thoughts to trouble the mind. Yet never for a moment is he boring.

The characters I have mentioned come from the novels of which 'Barchester Towers' is the best known. Actually, however, during these last months I have been reading the political novels 'Phineas Finn,' 'Phineas Redux,' 'The Prime Minister,' and 'The Duke's Children,' which tell you more about the realities of political life in England as it was in the last century—and, I would not mind betting my boots, still is at bottom to-day—than all the treaties on politics that have since been written.

Yet Trollope's world is totally different from ours. Men then had no doubts of their future lives in this world or of the future life in the next. I suppose it is escapism which invests these novels for me with their enormous contemporary appeal, in this age of violence, cruelty, insecurity and hatred. But if what you are escaping from is horrible, if what you are escaping to is calm and serene, is a spot of escapism necessarily reprehensible.

Another novelist who has gained enormously in popularity during the war, though for very different reasons, is Leo Tolstoy. 'War and Peace' is, by any account, the greatest novel ever written, a novel for low-brows—whatever they may be—because it is a novel for everybody and about everybody.

There are, broadly, two themes in 'War and Peace.' First, history; second, people. The history is of Napoleon's invasion of Russia, of

his defeat, or rather of the drawn battle of Borodino, which left his army like 'a wounded beast,' and his disastrous retreat.

There are two outstanding characteristics in Tolstoy's treatment; the first is realism. We are taken through great battles, through Austerlitz, Friedland, and Borodino. Tolstoy shows us soldiers making history, while at the same time dispelling the halo of heroism and the mist of false sentiment with which soldiers are normally surrounded. Tolstoy's soldiers, like soldiers everywhere, have no conception of the high adventures in which they are engaged. The privates are concerned with drink, with gambling, with boots, with the feel of their uniforms; the officers with their pleasures; the generals with intrigues.

It is a commonplace in physics that the large-scale outside view of things is totally different from the inside view that you see through a microscope. The large-scale view shows the chairs and tables of the familiar world; the inside view, a whirl of electric charges. Tolstoy gives you the inside view of war. It is part of the inside view that no soldier knows anything about the battle in which he is fighting. Tolstoy emphasises the point that nobody ever sees a battle—he sees only the one point of combat where he happens to be stationed. Even the general sees only a tiny department of the whole. There is nobody, not even Napoleon himself, who, until it is over, succeeds in seeing the wood for the trees.

It is part of Tolstoy's realism that he shows brave men overcome with fear and panic; shows how suddenly exhilaration and proud confidence can give way to fear and panic. Young Rostov in his first battle goes through the whole gamut of human feeling, and his experiences are, I should imagine, the vividdest account of what being in a battle is like that has ever been penned.

Tolstoy does not write these historical themes for their own sake but to illustrate a theory; the theory is primarily negative. History is not made by great men, and genius is a myth. There are no great men and women, says Tolstoy somewhere, there are only men and

women. Even chance as a factor is ruled out. We must go below the surface to find out the causes which really determine events. 'Whenever the hand of my watch points to ten,' says Tolstoy, 'I hear a neighbouring clock strike; but I should not, therefore, infer that the hand of my watch tolls the bell of the church clock.' The question which interests Tolstoy is—if not genius, if not human will, if not even chance, what is it that determines history? 'How,' he asks, 'do millions of men come to accomplish joint crimes such as wars, massacres and so forth?'

He is sufficiently interested in the answer to this question to write an epilogue of 50 pages, giving what is in effect a determinist theory of history. Men, he holds, are not the arbiters of their destinies, but are puppets jerked into love and war by forces outside their knowledge and control. But the theory is not very interesting, and contributes little to the enjoyment of the book. I mention it only because, to illustrate, it is one of Tolstoy's avowed objects in writing the novel.

Now for the people. The people in it, and there are hundreds of them, are essentially ordinary people. To come to the end of a Tolstoy novel is like coming to the end of a happy, crowded, interesting, and varied day. There is no single emotion, and no single human activity which Tolstoy does not excel in portraying.

Broadly, the book is a history of two families: the families of the Rostovs and the Bolkonskis. The number and variety of the characters is apt to put people off, nor are matters helped by the Russian names. Every Russian seems to have at least half a dozen names, and Tolstoy always seems to be selecting a different name out of the half dozen by which to refer to them. Hence the book is not easy going, at any rate at first. Starting it is rather like climbing a mountain, and it is only when you have got some way up that you can look back and get a bird's-eye view of the scenery spread out below you and enjoy something of the exhilaration of the ascent. As I have ventured to say before great art never comes to one

easily; one must be prepared to endure a little boredom, and to make some effort.

But presently, as one is taken through the innumerable scenes painted on Tolstoy's vast canvas, through the camp, the court, the drawing-room, the country house, the hospital, one begins to feel at home; one has been introduced into a new and very exciting world in which all the characters are alive and kicking, as real as the people you know in your own life, often more real.

To say that the book is a photograph of life would be to do it an injustice; it is rather like a picture by a great artist; the difference between a picture and a photograph being that a photograph gives only the external appearance; the great picture, for example a picture by one of the Dutch Masters, the inner nature of the person.

The characters play their parts in a series of tremendous scenes, for example the scene at Count Bezukhov's death bed, where one sees the dying man surrounded with the sordid intrigues of the mob of relatives who are competing for dead man's shoes.

Tolstoy's characters develop. He is a master of portraying the changes through which people pass as they grow older. Take Natasha. You see first a lovely, seductive young girl, fine drawn, every nerve tingling with the excitement of being alive, like a young thoroughbred horse. She falls in love with Prince Andrew Bolkonski, is engaged to him, then falls under the spell of a rake Kuragin, breaks her engagement with Andrew, is dropped by Kuragin, finds Andrew again by chance after he has been fatally wounded in battle, travels with him, nurses him, is present at his death bed, and then, after going through this appalling tragedy of passion and remorse, subsides, or rather swells into a young, middle-aged, commonplace matron, the horizon of whose world is bounded by her husband, Peter and her children. The scenes where she greets her husband when he comes home, the husband whom she used to think so stupid and now regards as the cleverest of men; her talk about the children, what they have said during the day, what they

have worn; her summary of the events of her commonplace domestic day, give one an extraordinary insight into the change of interests and character in a woman when she marries and settles down.

It is impossible to read 'War and Peace' without being sensible of some effect on oneself. Take two aspects of life at random: First, 'War and Peace' contains, I think, the happiest day I know of in literature, when Nicolas Rostov and Natasha, his sister, spend a day hunting, and afterwards go to supper with the 'Little Uncle.' There is singing after dinner, and a moonlit ride home over the snow in a troika.

Secondly, there is the most realistic portrayal of what it is like to be a soldier, of a soldier's fears before battle, of his fury and his triumph in battle. And then there is Tolstoy's account of the horrors of Napoleon's retreat before Moscow. It is not merely that one understands more about people, knows more about the world; one's vision is not only enlarged but enriched so that one sees more beauty, more passion, more scope for one's growth and understanding in life than one saw before, and, so seeing, one becomes a bigger person.

Bernard Shaw

To pass from one great writer to another, here is a story about Shaw that may help to enrich the saga of legend which has grown up about his name.

In the middle of the last war one of the best-known of the younger poets was badly shell-shocked and invalided home. For a long while he was unable to work or to write. He had a wife and three small children and the family was hard put to it for money. He be-thought himself of two well-known and wealthy literary men who,

he had reason to believe, thought highly of his literary work, and decided to write to them for assistance.

One was Shaw, the other must be nameless. His letter was couched in no begging terms. It said, in effect, that while serving his country he had been temporarily incapacitated from continuing his profession; that he had always understood that the person to whom he was writing admired his work, and that, in the circumstances, he felt no compunction in asking him for assistance to tide him over until such time as he could work again. From the literary man, who shall be nameless, he received a letter saying that it was quite true that he (the literary man) did admire the poet's work, that he sympathised with his predicament and that he proposed to send his solicitor to call upon him to see whether his circumstances were as stated; should his solicitor's report be favourable he would write again. In due course there came another letter from this famous but nameless literary man. 'I have now,' he said, in effect, 'had my solicitor's report, and I am satisfied that your circumstances are as you describe them, and I have much pleasure in enclosing a cheque for £10.'

By the same post there came a card from Shaw: 'Dear ——. I abominate your poetry and always have done. Here is a cheque for £400.'

Censorship and pornographic literature

I am not in favour of censorship in any form, political or moral. People are always wanting to prohibit the publication of books, plays or articles that they think indecent. There are at least three important reasons against the suppression of literature on these or any other grounds.

There is a general agreement among us that truth is valuable; it is also infrequent and difficult to spot when it first turns up. When

it is new, truth always seems shocking to most people, especially to the old, who have the power in a community, and make and administer the laws. If the fact that somebody takes objection to anything that appears in a book is a reason for suppressing the book, then we must conclude that the judgment of mankind is infallible. I see no reason for thinking that it is infallible.

The Aztecs believed that the sun would grow dim unless it were fed with the sacrifice of living human flesh. Now the fact that the Aztecs held this belief so strongly that to question it was thought shocking, does not seem to me a reason for thinking that the belief was true, or that the Aztecs ought not to have been shocked by having it questioned.

The suppression of 'doubtful' literature presupposes the belief that sex is somehow wicked and should never be mentioned except with extreme circumspection, and to the young not mentioned at all. Again I can see no grounds for this belief. For one thing, it is an insult to the Almighty, who contrived sex as a means for perpetuating the species (we may confess to a feeling of pained surprise that He did not devise something more edifying, but He did not, and I am blessed if I can see why we should regard His contrivance as wicked). Is there, after all, anything more disgraceful about the means by which life is produced than about those by which it is maintained? Nobody, so far as I know, thinks discussions of eating and drinking wicked, yet it is by eating and drinking that life is maintained. There is nothing particularly edifying about popping solid and liquid substances through an expanding hole at the bottom of one's face. So if there is to be suppression, let us suppress the discussion of meals! Suppression defeats its own object. Prudery is the fig leaf of the imagination, and invests what it covers with a glamorous excitement. Consequently, to suppress a book is to endow it with a fictitious interest.

I conclude that if you abolish the obscenity laws then the market for pornography will lose its 'bootleg' value. Keep them and some-

body will always be finding something wicked somewhere to lick his lips over. There is something inherently nasty about the censorship. ('The censor,' to quote a line of Auden's, 'shall dream of knickers—a nasty beast!')

Style

People often ask what style is and how they can acquire it. It is wrong to think of style as a sort of preliminary something to be cultivated, a sort of weapon you must acquire before you begin to write. What is important in a writer is what he says, not how he says it. Have something to say which you see clearly and about which you feel strongly; say it as simply, as shortly, as forcibly as you can, and then have done, and good style will be the result. For style is nothing more nor less than effectiveness of assertion. A man who has got something to assert will go just as far for point of style as its momentousness will carry him. If he has got nothing to assert, he has no style and cannot have one.

I should like to put it on record that I have never in these articles thought twice about my style, or wondered whether I have one or not, or whether it isn't, as I hope and believe, just plain, straightforward talking. I have, however, taken as much pains as I have the patience to endure with my handwriting, which in spite of my efforts to correct it will insist on relapsing into the wildness of its primitive illegibility.

Hence my advice to the young man who wants to write and asks on whom he should model his prose style is—on nobody at all. And I should add, don't write at all unless you have something you really want to say.

B.B.C. accent or local dialect?

I feel very much the same on the question of holding up one English accent, be it B.B.C., Oxford, or the King's English, as the standard accent for English. I don't like anything that tends towards uniformity and standardisation. And yet, I think that there *should* be a standard English accent so that the world may know what English is or rather ought to be. Very important this at the present time, when the English language is being debased and debauched by a hundred and one different kinds of pronunciation and expressions, mainly from overseas.

But at the same time, it would be a disaster if everybody spoke in the standard voice and with the standard accent. That is because I am a believer in variety in society, and hold that the more various the human beings the richer and more valuable the society which contains them. It is not by wearing us all down to a single uniformity, whether of clothes, appearance, manner, thought, or speech, that society advances, nor is such a society worth belonging to.

So, in the matter of speech I should like to think that local dialects and accents will continue; that means continue both for good and for bad. The good are delightful, the bad appalling. At the head of the delightful is the voice and accent of the Irish. An Irishman has only to open his mouth for me to be so ravished by the sounds that he makes that for the time being I can be persuaded to believe anything he wants me to. (Query the origin of Irish blarney?)

At the other end of the scale the appalling American film star has only to open her mouth for me to shudder all over with repulsion or giggle with embarrassment. Between these two extremes accents can be graded on a descending scale of agreeableness. Among those with which I am familiar comes after the Irish, the accent of West Sussex, then of Devonshire, then of Scotland (Highland Scotch, not Glasgow), then Yorkshire, then Lancashire (there *really*

is a difference between them though few Southerners can distinguish it), then Welsh, then Cockney, then 'Brummagem,' and then the American.

The survival of Welsh

As with local dialects, so with national languages. I am all in favour of the preservation of national characteristics, including national languages, provided that they are natural growths and naturally preserved.

There was a time when I used to spend my holidays in an old country house, tucked away in a valley high up in the Welsh mountains. On the other side of the mountains there lived a Welsh harpist who played at the Eisteddfod and was a great man among his own people. He was very old, frail, and blind. He used to walk to us over the mountains, accompanied by a boy who helped him to carry his harp, arriving at the house about dusk. He would have a high tea, and then up to the living-room—a magnificent room with windows commanding a lovely view of river, meadow, rock, and mountain. There his harp would be set by a glowing log-fire and in the twilight he would begin to play. The harp is a limited instrument, but within its limitations lovely. He played only Welsh music, and he could speak no English—and for a moment one had a thrill of the wonder of strangeness of making contact with a different culture, even if it was only with the survival of a different culture. For a moment beauty had entered the room and brushed us with her wings.

Now, the point I am using this illustration to make is that the Welsh language so used, the Welsh custom so maintained, the Welsh music so played are wholly admirable things.

Let us take a glance at the other side of the picture. Here is a working-men's college to which miners go on scholarships for a

fortnight's holiday in the year, a fortnight which they are prepared to devote to study. They are English-speaking miners coming from South Wales, and these two weeks' holiday are the only two in the year which they have to devote to literature, philosophy, science, history, in fact to the unlocking of the store-house of the accumulated treasures of the culture and learning of mankind. Yet under the regulations at that college nearly half their time was devoted to instruction in the use and literature of the Welsh language. Welsh books were used, there was even a book of my own which had been deliberately translated into Welsh—not that it could not be read in the original, for the students were almost all English-speaking, but because Welsh nationalism, anxious for the artificial revival of the Welsh language, demanded that it should be read in Welsh.

The artificial revival and maintenance and imposition of a dying language upon those who naturally speak another language seems to me to be wholly bad, an example of that nationalism which seeks artificially to maintain and perpetuate itself, which is the curse of the modern world.

In other words, I am not in favour of any movement which would seek artificially to perpetuate something which left to itself would die. I don't want the Welsh language to die, but I should regret even more artificial attempts to keep it alive.

An international language

But it is high time in view of the growth in speedy transport and communication between one side of the world and the other, that the world adopted an international language. Such a language need have no literary aims and graces, but it must be the simplest possible medium of communication through which the common people of all lands can converse and make contact one with another. There

is some little hope, perhaps, that when the common people of the world can talk there will be less chance of those misunderstandings that lead to wars than there has been when international communication is the prerogative of diplomats and statesmen. And then, too, I want to be able to go to any country in Europe without losing my tongue. What a fool one feels when one cannot talk, thrown as one is upon the mercy of interpreters, and reduced to contact with porters, commissionaires, taxi-men, and waiters, but never a word with the ordinary common or garden citizen like oneself? .

If it is to fulfil these needs, what are the conditions that an international language must satisfy? It must be simple in structure, it must be easy to learn, it must be universal in scope, and it must make for, and not against, understanding and peace.

Basic English fulfils the first two of these conditions, but not, I think, the third and fourth. Take the fourth! The adoption of English is bound to lead to jealousy and suspicion among non-English-speaking nations, more particularly in the circumstances prevailing at the end of the war, when it would lend countenance to the suggestion that England and America propose to dominate the world. Anything more likely to alienate us from Russia I find it difficult to imagine. And what of the universality conditions? We are accustomed to say that English is the most widely spoken language in the world, and to deduce, therefore, that fewer would have to learn it than any other. But is this true? There are roughly 2,000,000,000 people in the world of whom 43,000,000 are English, 125,000,000 American, and about 20,000,000 citizens of the British Dominions. Add another 20,000,000 who are inhabitants of the Colonies and English-speaking foreigners, and we get a figure of something over 200,000,000, about a tenth of the world's population. But there are 420,000,000 Chinese.

It does not seem to me, therefore, that the claim of Basic English on the score of universality is very strong. For all these reasons, I am in favour of the adoption of an artificial international language.

Politics

Are we politically apathetic ?

The last Parliament was elected, you may remember, in 1935 on the issue of Collective Security and the taking of Sanctions against Mussolini, an issue as dead to-day as the world in which it arose. It is a Parliament which by 1944 was hopelessly unrepresentative of young people. Of those who are at the present in the Armed Forces, four out of every five had hitherto been disfranchised, since four out of every five were under 28 and were, therefore, without a vote when the last election took place.

Owing to the Party truce, Members of Parliament during the war had been returned for no better reason than that they have been able to secure the seal of approval of one of the three Party head offices; in other words, they have received a coupon ground out to them by the particular Party machine.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that people are politically apathetic. Some time ago a form was distributed amongst members of the Armed Forces, a form which they were asked to sign, if they wished their names to be added to the Register with a view to voting at the next election. I am told that there was the greatest difficulty in getting the men to sign—in fact, a friend who is in charge of something like 280 men told me that, after a week's propaganda in favour of the form, involving speeches about democracy and the importance of exercising one's rights as citizens, only two were found to be willing to take the trouble to fill the form up.

This seems to me a bad outlook for the world after the war, I think women are particularly at fault in this respect. I have recently been reading a volume called 'Journey Home,' compiled by Mass Observation, devoted to recording the hopes, wishes, expectation, and fears of people up and down the country in regard to the world after the war. One of the questions which was put to people was: 'What do you think of the news?' Characteristic answers by women were: 'I have not heard of it,' or 'I never read the papers,' or 'It doesn't seem too good, but I suppose it will be O.K. in the end,' or 'My husband sees to all that.' (I suppose they think that having chosen *them*, their husbands have given them such unassailable evidence of good judgment that they can safely leave everything else to their husband's judgment for the rest of their lives.)

A democracy is a form of Government in which citizens through their elected representatives have the right to decide broadly how they are to be governed and how the community should be run. If they forgo their right to make this decision, how are they different from the citizens of a totalitarian State, who flock like sheep into whatever pen the dictator chooses to drive them?

I don't fear controversy, strife, or conflict in a democracy. The more it argues, the more it debates, the more fiercely it canvasses the merits of different policies, the better. It is a sluggish, apathetic democracy that I think dangerous, because it is already half-way on the road to Fascism. It is no answer to this for men to be sceptical about politicians and say that the politician will always lead them up the garden path. The remedy is simple, to elect different politicians. But to do this, you *must* exercise your right of election.

It is no good saying that after the last war all the promises made during the war were forgotten, and that this will happen again this time, so what's the good, anyway? For what is there to prevent precisely this happening unless it is a determination on the part of young men in the forces, who want a better world, to elect those

who will see that it does *not* happen and to turn them out if they show signs of letting it happen and letting them down. But to make this determination good they must exercise their rights as citizens.

Political liberty and the armed forces

That citizens should be able to exercise their rights as citizens was one of the issues in the war. For what have we been fighting for?

For, among other things, the right not to be Nazis, not to be robots, not to be unthinking automata flocking like sheep into whatever pen the dictator-shepherd drives us, but alert, critical, independent-minded citizens, thinking our own thoughts, passing our own judgments, refusing to be "put upon" by important persons, or 'mucked about' by officials merely because they are dressed up in the brief authority of their little day; helping as citizens to decide the policy of our country and to determine the kind of community in which we want to live. That is the kind of society for which we are fighting.

Now, for that society many of us are conscripted to fight. Our army, that is to say, is not a professional army but a conscript army, and is, therefore, a citizen army. With what bewilderment, then, when men take upon themselves the duty of fighting for their country, do they suddenly discover that they have been deprived of the right of talking about and discussing in public the kind of country for which they are fighting and in which, when the war is over, they want to live?

But it may be said that they are not, in fact, deprived. When this matter was discussed in the House of Commons, I noticed that Mr. A. Henderson, the Under-Secretary for War, denied that soldiers were deprived of political rights, denied that they were muzzled. For example, he pointed out that they could vote and attend political

meetings, or, more precisely, that there was nothing in King's Regulations to prevent them from doing so.

It is true there is not. But how onerous are the conditions. First condition : they must be on leave. Second : they must be in mufti. Third : they must be in their own constituency. Fourth : there must be an election in that constituency. Fifth : they must not make speeches or express their opinions, but only ask questions. Sixth : they must ask 'proper questions.'

What, then, are improper questions? Apparently they are controversial questions, because Henderson pointed out that if controversial questions were asked a soldier 'might be regarded as taking an active part in the meeting, and that would be forbidden.' Now, I should like to know, how can anybody ask a political question that is not a controversial question? Hence, though the rights of citizenship are, in fact, conceded, in practice, so severe are the restrictions for soldiers they are withheld.

I am one of those who believe that free, frank and full discussion on any and every possible question is a sign of mental, spiritual and political health. It is said that if the Army became political its efficiency as an army might be impaired. Discipline requires obedience and not discussion.

What, then, I should like to ask, of the Red Army? It is the most political in the world. Is it, militarily, the most unsuccessful? One would scarcely have thought so.

Secondly, it is clear that there must be great changes. We cannot go back to 1939. Now the best way to ensure violence is to sit on the safety valves of speech, opinion, and discussion; the best way to prevent it is to open them, that through them men's voices may find vent to express their views, so that if there are grievances they are publicly aired, and if there are objectives, like the Beveridge Report, which the people want, they can be publicly demanded.

So political rights for soldiers, the right to speak, when in mufti

and on civilian leave, on any and every question of the day, as civilians speak, seems to me one of the best insurances against violent change beside being one of the principles which justified the war.

The delights of dictatorship

In spite of the foregoing, I suppose that, like everybody else, I should like to be a dictator, I hope benevolent, of this country. We all would, precisely because we all love power. 'The love of power,' says Hazlitt somewhere, 'is natural to men. We desire it for ourselves, and admire it in others. The first propensity turns men into tyrants; the second into slaves.'

I, having the natural propensity to be a tyrant, think of all the things I could do with power. I think of all my pet schemes, and mount all my pet hobby horses—how I would abolish cars, how I would forbid the planting of pines, larches and spruces, how I would set up national parks, how I would educate everybody compulsorily up to the age of 18, how I would surround myself with brilliant men and attractive women, all of whom would toady to me because of my power, how I would indulge myself in all my favourite vices—in over eating and over drinking, in the gusts of irritability for which nobody would be able to rebuke me, in the pleasures of throwing my weight about, knowing that none would dare to take me down.

And because I, like everybody else, believe that my opinions and prejudices are no prejudices at all, but only common-sense wisdom, I naturally think the country would be infinitely better off if I were its dictator.

And no doubt, from the country's point of view, my dictatorship *would* be wholly beneficial. But what about me? What about the debasing effects of power upon me? It was Macaulay who said that

Puritans objected to bear-baiting, not because of the pain that it gave to the bear, but because of the pleasure that it gave to the spectators. Similarly, I object to absolute power mainly because of its effect upon the victor. Of all human temptations, the temptation of power is the most insidious and grows most with what it feeds on, so that benevolent dictators using power for what they believe to be the people's good are presently found to be using it for their own pleasure.

The careers of Nero and Caligula, of Kings John and Richard II in our own country, of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great in Russia, to take a few names at random from history's terrible list, bear witness to the fact that men whose position raises them above the human station fall in character below it. To give man the power of gods is, in fact, to afford a reasonable presumption that they will behave like beasts. Every slave owner who has beaten and starved his slaves, every mill owner who has overworked and underpaid his employees, every charity school or workhouse master who has bullied and starved the little wretches whom poverty has placed in his power, illustrates the same melancholy truth that men simply are not angelic enough to be able to carry the burden of absolute power. 'All power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely,' said Lord Acton, the great historian. I see no reason to suppose that with all my benevolence I should wield power more disinterestedly or escape its corrupting effects any more effectively than my predecessors.

And so, although there may be two opinions as to whether my benevolent dictatorship would be good for the country, there can be only one that it would be bad for me.

The party system of government

But if not dictatorship, what then? Presumably democracy and the Party System of Government. But is the British Party System good both for the elector and for the nation?

There are, of course, objections to it. Inevitably, perhaps, in any Parliament there tend to be mediocrities who once elected are never remembered. The right of election of representatives, which is supposed to be one of the basic rights of democracy, amounts, in practice, to little more than the right of rejection of the slightly more unsuitable of two or three totally unsuitable persons, one of whom descends from the clouds of the Party office in London.

There is no easy remedy for this. Nevertheless I am a staunch supporter of the party system; there must be an Opposition, otherwise you have the conditions for dictatorship. But I am not in favour of many small parties and mobs of independent candidates.

If the Party system is to work, parties must be limited to two or at most three. Incidentally, when a third party was introduced into the Parliamentary system by the rise of Labour the system immediately began to get into difficulties..

A Parliament composed of a phantasmagoria of shifting groups makes firm Government impossible, and renders the party game so complicated that politicians are much more concerned with playing it than with representing their constituents or governing the country.

They are continually manœuvring and intriguing to get the various party groups to combine with sufficient cohesion to give them a majority. But the groups are always shifting and the majority is rarely stable. This was the curse of French politics before the war. It militates against firm and continuous government.

Two subsidiary disadvantages are : First, that the Ministers must give more attention to the formation and maintenance of their ever-shifting majority than to the Government of the country; and, secondly, every party group representing, as it usually does, a sec-

tional interest, is in a position to blackmail the Government into favouring its interest as the price of its support.

It was Lord Halifax who said that the best party is but a kind of conspiracy against the rest of the nation. This, no doubt, is, in its measure, true; where there are a lot of parties, each party becomes a conspiracy to extract favours for its members and nothing else, with the result that the national interest goes to pot.

What I do favour is choice of candidates by the local parties. Broadly, this does not happen. The choice of candidate is dictated by money. How much can the trade union or the individual contribute? The Labour Party, which sponsors elderly trade unionists, pensioning them by the State at £600 a year, is not much better than the Tories. And as for them, if you read 'Tory M.P.' by Simon Haxey, you will realise how completely the selection of a Tory candidate depends on the amount he is prepared to contribute to Party funds.

An M.P.—the voice of the voters?

Still, despite all his disadvantages, the Member of Parliament is the living embodiment of the principle of representative government, the principle that it is only the wearer who knows where the shoe pinches, and if, therefore, the shoe does pinch—if, that is to say, the law hurts or oppresses him—he should have a conduit pipe through which to say so.

History has shown, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, that human beings simply are not angelic enough to be trusted with power. Give them power and sooner or later they will abuse it; therefore, people must have the right to get rid of their rulers, which means conduit pipes through which they can tell their rulers where they 'get off.'

In this sense, then, an M.P. must regard himself as a representa-

tive of his constituents. He should be a man of common opinions—this is, of opinions which most of his constituents hold—but uncommon abilities. But it is important to remember first that no representative can ever truly represent. He cannot represent all his constituents on any issue or any of them on all issues; he can only hope to represent most of them on most. When we think how most M.P.s are chosen we can only wonder that they represent their constituents as well as they do, for the constituents as I said earlier, do not really exercise the power of selection, but only of rejection. Very important, then, that people should not take their representatives too seriously.

Nor do they. I was speaking a little while ago at a Yorkshire town when the two local M.P.s were expected to be present. The mayor, who had been a miner and was about as West Riding as he could well be, was my chairman. He obviously wanted the M.P.s to turn up before I began to speak—I don't know whether it was because he wanted them to hear his opening remarks or whether he wanted them to hear mine—but, whatever the reason, he prolonged his chairman's address, continually turning his head over his shoulder to see whether they were coming. After about a quarter of an hour, when they still hadn't turned up, the mayor gave them up in disgust and, walking to the front of the platform, he said to the audience: 'Eh, lads, we'd best get starting; they two blighters be late.' A very proper attitude to one's M.P.s.

On the other hand, the M.P. should never be *merely* a conduit pipe; he should try to direct as well as to express public opinion. After all, nobody wants an M.P. to be a mere puppet, twitched this way and that according to the strongest string that pulls him at the moment. All great statesmen have been men of will, determination, and character in their own right, who have not on occasion hesitated to tell their constituents to go to the devil.

But the electors for their part must not regard their M.P. as an employer, and demand that deductions be made from his pay if

he does not attend the House often enough for their liking. The fact that he is paid is incidental, payment having been introduced merely to enable poor men who could not otherwise afford to go to Parliament to represent poor men. If you don't pay members, you make Parliament a rich man's preserve. If an M.P. does not do his duty properly his constituents have a simple remedy. They can cease to re-elect him, in which case, of course, the payment stops.

Party politics and mudslinging

Do Party politics lead to mudslinging? Of course they do, but what of it? It is much better to say what one thinks and to say it in the words that come naturally to one, than to shut it up inside one. Mealymouthedness is one of the curses of the age, and the popular papers and may I add, the popular Sunday papers, are largely responsible for it. To what length do they go in order not to call a spade a spade! Everything must be referred to as something other than what it is.

Similarly with regard to swearing. I do not think politics were any less sweet in the 19th century when O'Connell could say of Disraeli—Prime Minister at the time—'He is a liar in action and in words . . . he is a disgrace to his species . . . he is a man degraded both in body and mind, and England is degraded in tolerating or having upon the face of her society a miscreant of his abominable, foul, and atrocious nature . . . he possesses just the qualities of the impudent thief who died upon the Cross, whose name I verily believe must have been Disraeli'—than they are to-day when M.P.s. professed to feeling disturbed when Mr. Churchill described his critics as covering Churchill tanks 'with their slime.'

Hard words never did anybody much harm. What matters are the

thoughts and intentions behind them, and I am not sure that the thoughts and the intentions are any the worse for being ventilated in a little swearing.

And criticism in Parliament

Similarly with criticism of the Government even when the country is at war. Perhaps you may remember the disclosures in some of the Parliamentary debates on the progress of the War. It was Mr. Churchill, I think, who remarked on one of them that in no other country fighting for its life in war-time had a debate involving such unbridled criticism of the Government ever occurred; that in no other country *could* it have occurred.

That is true, and is at once our glory and our burden. It is our glory, because we, and we alone, can bear the burden, and the fact that we can bear it, and wish to, is at once the supreme thing which makes England worth fighting for—and the supreme prize.

But what a burden!

It cannot, I suppose, be doubted that the disclosures in some of the debates heartened our enemies and added to their confidence, while depressing our own troops and adversely affecting the output of the munition workers at home.

Yet, what is the alternative? Presumably to muzzle members of Parliament and to prevent them from speaking their mind when things go wrong. This would, in effect, be to emasculate Parliament and to deprive its deliberations of all authority. In effect it might just as well close down, and probably would. With what results? First, to deprive people of the voice of their representatives in Parliament would enormously increase the sensitivity of their ears, in the sense that there would spring up at once an unholy crop of rumour, growing ever more sinister and sensational, suggesting that things are worse even than they are. In that connection, what about the

fall of France? Many factors produced the collapse, but not least important was the weakening of French morale by the muzzling of French political parties and the erection of a wall of silence, behind which rumour could stalk abroad and Fifth Columnists flourish unseen.

Secondly, again and again in this war errors have been corrected, faults disclosed and omissions pointed out by Parliamentary criticism. Again and again it has punctured the bubble of official complacency and forced reforms upon the Government.

Finally, to muzzle Parliament or the Press, which raises precisely the same principle, is to betray the cause for which we are fighting. Not much point in winning a battle for freedom if in the process you surrender that freedom.

Members of Parliament

The overwhelming majority of M.P.s are men, a fact which often gives rise to questions something like this—'look what a mess men make of public affairs. Couldn't the women do better?'

This is not the place to generalise on the difference between men and women. Besides, all wise men think the same thing about women, although no wise man has ever yet said what it is. But subject to this, it seems pretty obvious that whereas men think in terms of ideas, theories, systems, rules, women think in terms of individual human beings. I ask what is best for men, women, clergymen, and citizens. A woman asks what is best for Tom, or Joe, or Gertie, or Anne. Now legislation is concerned to regulate the things in people, and the relations between them, which are common to them all. For example, with the facts that they all want food and clothes, a job, justice before the law, education and security from violence; with the obligation laid upon them all to pay their taxes, drive on the left-hand side of the road, and so on. It is not con-

cerned with what is individual about them, not, that is to say, what marks one of them off and distinguishes them one from another.

In general, then, legislation is a job not for women, but for men, and women, of whom there is a majority of nearly two million in the electorate and who persistently refuse to send more than a dozen of their own sex to Parliament out of a total number of 615 M.P.s, know this as well as I do, though most of them would see me hung sooner than make the admission.

If we get, to-day, unrepresentative members, we have only ourselves to thank. It is in the last resort up to us to select our member, and if women persistently return men, and men not women, and go on electing members of famous political families such as the Astors, the Lloyd Georges or the Churchills not because of their political competence but because of the famous names they bear, then on their own heads be it.

Any system is bad which gives Parliament the appearance of being a closed preserve for particular classes or particular families. The fact that it was such a preserve, and that the son of his father went automatically into Parliament as a representative of a 'pocket' borough, was one of the abuses we tried to remove by the Reform Bill in 1832. I don't see why we should discriminate against promising young politicians *merely* because their fathers or uncles were themselves promising politicians, even if they failed to fulfil their promise. A strain of the same kind of ability tends to run in families. Political ability is not necessarily an exception. Look at the Pitts, or even the Churchills.

Governments by experts

One of the characteristics of our system of government which a visitor from Mars would find quite incomprehensible is the placing of a Minister at the head of a Department of which he may have

no technical knowledge. For example, few Chancellors of the Exchequer are trained economists or Ministers of Health medical men. For my part, provided they are properly educated I see nothing surprising in such a system. A properly educated man should be able to give sensible directions to those who know more about the detail of a job than he does himself.

What is important here is the distinction between what ought to be done and how to do what ought to be done. I do not have to be a good gardener to know that the beans are stringy, the roses blighted, and the apples rotten. I know perfectly well the things I want are succulent beans, unblighted roses, and whole apples, and I employ a gardener and tell him what I want.

It is the business of a Minister of Health to know broadly the kind of results which ought to be produced. It is his business, for example, to know that the maternal mortality rate is a scandal; that the infant mortality rate is pretty bad; that most country cottages are insanitary, and that the infections spread where living conditions are overcrowded. These are the beans, roses, and apples, and it is the business of the experts to tell him how to produce them.

Specialists are all very well in their place, but their place is not that of the helmsman on the bridge determining where the ship should go, but of the engineer in the boiler room concerned to see that the ship goes as it ought to. Specialists tend to live in water-tight compartments. It is the job of a Minister to bring to a focus the results achieved in each of the compartments, pool them, collate them, and then decide what ought to be done.

Payment and class distinctions in the community

Politics, Shaw tells us, is the science of social life, the life of the community. In any rationally organised community, those who do the most dangerous and difficult work and those who do the most

useful work would be the best-paid classes. In the first class are the miners who warm our bodies and the agricultural labourers who feed them; in the second, the teachers who form and feed our minds. The answer then, is, broadly speaking, miners, agricultural labourers, and teachers. This, however, is not the principle on which the community proceeds. As I pointed out in the chapter on Education, Glasgow teachers, the products of an expensive training, replete with every accomplishment from piano playing to French have been getting less pay than Glasgow war-time bus conductresses.

Or consider somebody occupying a post of power and authority, a supervisor, manager, executive, or business head. All day he sits in his office, dictating letters, deciding big issues, settling the affairs of his employees, ticking off the ugly typist and indulging the pretty one; in a word, throwing his weight about, expressing himself, enjoying himself; for it was Aristotle who said that the best life exists in the activity of our most highly developed talents and faculties, exercised at concert pitch upon an appropriate subject matter; consists, in other words, in doing what we are fitted to do, and suited for, at the top of our bent, with all our powers at full stretch.

What fun all this is for the business head, the headmaster, the bishop, or the Cabinet Minister! Really he ought to be required to pay the community for permitting him to have such exciting and absorbing work. And yet the glutton demands that he should be paid for doing what he wants to do, and paid 20 or 30 times as much as the wretched miner delving in the bowels of the earth at hazard of health and limb, or the scarcely less wretched teacher striving with inadequate equipment to teach 50 children at once. How unjust and illogical is the community!

People say that they expect to see a decay in class distinction through the mixing of boys of all social classes in the Forces and the mines. I think they will be disappointed.

Working-class boys and public school boys are constantly meeting as it is. When I was an undergraduate I used to attend boys' clubs

and boys' club camps, where undergraduates from Oxford and boys from shop, mill, factory, and mine were supposed to shake down together under canvas. And shake down they did; but directly the camp was over, back again we went to our separate classes. Again, boys from all classes are continually meeting, feeding together, working together, playing together, and fighting together in the Forces, but the fact did not destroy the class system in the last war, and it won't after this war. The class system is the product of differences of wealth and differences of education. It expresses itself in accent, in clothes, in manners, in how to go into a room and how to get out of it, in how to order a meal. So long as there are gross inequalities of income, so long as one man can spend on a meal as much as will keep a working-class family for a week, so long as we go through different educational machines, so long will the class system remain, in spite of occasional intervals of fraternising in the mines or the Forces.

If you want to get rid of class distinctions, the simplest way is to give everyone the same income. This, I think, is neither practical nor desirable, but it *is* practical, I repeat, to give everybody the same educational chances by putting them through the same educational system, and taking it out of a rich man's power to buy a superior brand of education for his children just because he has got a balance at the bank.

Standardisation and the curse of the machine

Which is not to say that I agree with the prevailing trend towards standardisation in talk, in houses, in food and clothing, and even in character. I am strongly against any attempt to impose an artificial uniformity.

It is in the ant heap, is it not, that the likeness of its members one to another is stressed and uniformity of behaviour developed to its

logical conclusion? The Fascist States do their best to emulate the ant heap, yet, judged by the Fascist standards of uniformity, discipline, obedience, and conformity to pattern, the ants make a much better job of the Corporate State. It is important to cultivate those aspects in respect of which human beings differ, and not those in respect of which they are alike. Human beings are, in fact, by nature very different, different in their sources of pleasure and their susceptibilities to pain, and unless there is a corresponding difference in their ways of life they won't get their fair share of happiness, and they won't be able to develop along the lines of their own distinctive individualities.

Uniformity impoverishes the spirit, deadens the mind, and robs the community that imposes it of the elements of spontaneity, of originality and gaiety, substituting monotony and dullness. The increase of uniformity means that all young women have the same face, and all young men the same mind, that everybody gives you the answer you expect, with the result that the community has never been so little various and so very dull, which is one of the great dangers of the modern world.

There are all sorts of reasons for it. The main one is machines. Most of us spend our lives in association with machines, performing the same monotonous routine process several hundred times a day, working under identical conditions, tending machines and serving them. And inevitably the machines impose something of their own nature, their regularity, their uniformity, upon their human servitors. Then most of us are now unable to play without the assistance of machines. What are the modern conceptions of entertainment? To step on throttles, to crowd through clicking turnstiles, to scan headlines, to rush over or beneath the surface of the earth and the sea in mechanisms propelled by petrol. All of them are pursuits for which we require the use of machines. To machines again we dedicate an increasing number of the other functions of living. We have forgotten the art of conversation.

Instead of conversing we turn on the radio. We no longer make music ourselves. Instead of playing or singing we put a record on the gramophone. The car had induced many of us to forget the use of our legs, or had, until the war came. The invasion of human personality by machines extends into every department of our lives. Machines provide us with entertainment at the cinema, with news in the papers and uplift over the radio, and so fill our minds and manufacture our souls. They invade the kitchen. Most of our women have forgotten how to cook. What they do is to warm up food that has already been cooked by machines. They don't so much prepare meals as take out of tins and boxes meals that have already been prepared by machines. One can continue this theme indefinitely. The effect of it all is that human nature, which once was individual and various, is being increasingly approximated to a single level.

It is partly, also, because so many of us live in towns. A day or two ago I was talking to a man in the country who makes his living by buying and selling horses. Golly, what a character! What a personality, rich, ripe, various and fruity, all alive and kicking. The world, I think, used to be much fuller of such characters than it is now. Partly it is because there are too many of us and we have rubbed all the idiosyncrasies out of one another. I am all for variety because it makes for interest and excitement in life. The things in respect of which we are dull are the things that we possess in common, emotions, passion, and so on. In other words, it is in respect of our minds and our spirits that we differ, and the more society lives in the mind and the spirit the more various it becomes. Thus women seem to me to be duller than men, savages than women, and animals than savages, with, of course, all sorts of exceptions either way.

John Stuart Mill says: 'It is not by wearing down into uniformity all that is individual in themselves, but by cultivating it and calling it forth, that human beings become a noble and beautiful object of

contemplation.' That, too, is why society should always tolerate its cranks, oddities, scolds, and eccentrics, however much they may annoy it, for they keep it up to the mark.

There was a famous fisherman who used to go out every day with the trawler fleet from Yarmouth. Regularly after every trip he brought back not only more fish than his competitors but fresher fish. How, everybody wanted to know, did he do it? It was only on his death-bed that he revealed his secret. 'I put,' said he, 'a live catfish at the bottom of the tank in which the fish I've caught are stored. The presence of the catfish keeps them in a state of constant agitation and turmoil.' The more catfish in a society the better for the society.

The remedies? Well, it is the mind of man that is various, and the mind is developed by education; the spirit of man that is capable of infinite development and incalculable richness of experience, and spiritual life is lived in and through religion. If we were to place a value upon education and to rediscover our souls, we should escape the deadening uniformity which comes of mass-produced pleasures and the creation-saving, machine-provided amusement.

War, Wickedness and Science

Is the pen mightier than the sword?

Whenever war and peace, force and ideals are discussed, someone will invariably be found to trot out the old platitude about the pen being mightier than the sword. Mightier for what? I always want to ask. For obviously, the sword is mightier for fighting, and the pen for writing. One fights to impose one's will by superior violence; one writes to express ideas, so I suppose that what the statement really means is that ideas have more influence in the world than violence. Now is this so? Do I think that violence has more influence in the world than ideas?

But surely the implied opposition between violence and ideas is delusive. Are there no ideas behind violence? Is the gangster without thought? Surely not. Here am I wielding a sword. Am I to direct it into A.'s tummy, or into B.'s? Obviously it makes a good deal of difference which I choose, and obviously, therefore, there must be a mind behind the sword which determines against whom it shall be used.

Violence, in other words, is used for a purpose and in pursuance of a plan, a purpose which mind conceives, a plan which mind designs. The Nazis have let loose floods of violence upon the world, but always in the interests of certain ideas, the so-called Nazi philosophy.

Even in war which legitimises violence, strategy, which is composed of ideas, is as important as the action by which a strategy is put into execution. Look at Hitler and the mistakes in strategy he made.

any one of which would have been sufficient to lose ten ordinary wars—for example, when he failed to invade Britain in July, 1940, when he called off the bombing of British cities in April, 1941, and when he invaded Russia in June, 1941.

These mistakes in ideas were so flagrant and so unexpected that it almost looks as if a special Providence were watching over this country, a Providence which had chosen Hitler to exemplify the maxim: 'Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad.' All this means, of course, that there is no such thing as violence without ideas. What matters is the kind of ideas in the service of which the violence is used.

Now look at the opposition between pen and sword from another point of view. The sword can only destroy; ideas can destroy—the ideas of Bolshevism destroyed Czarism; the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau destroyed the French aristocracy; the ideas of the Nazis destroyed German Social Democracy—but ideas can also build, whereas the sword can only destroy.

Ideas have destroyed slavery and have put an end to duelling; they have dispelled the superstition of witchcraft, and abolished—or had until the Nazis brought it back—the practice of the use of torture to obtain confessions. But ideas have also built; they have built free institutions and democracy—and social insurance and education.

It is, in fact, the power of ideas which has brought us out of barbarism into such civilisation as we have been able to achieve. 'In what,' asked Aristotle, 'does man differ from the animal?' and answered, 'It is by virtue of his reason.' Pascal, the greatest of French thinkers, agreed. The greatness of man, he held, consists in his thinking. The universe is vast and man is tiny, but man, he pointed out, has one advantage over the universe. He knows it is vast and he is tiny, and the universe doesn't.

In this sense, the sense that it is to ideas and not to violence, to the pen and not to the sword, that man owes whatever distinguishes him from the animals, whatever has enabled him to rise over a purely

savage condition, the pen is mightier than the sword. For the pen is the vehicle of thought, and it is by thought that man is enabled to voyage through the infinite in philosophy, to unlock the secrets of the universe in science, to contemplate the universe, to create beauty, and to commune with God.



Poison gas or high explosives

Once violence has been loosed on the world, I find it difficult to point to any one manifestation of it and assert that it is worse than another. For example, I cannot see that poison gas is really more inhuman than bayonets or high explosives.

Here, let us suppose, are two bombs that have dropped from an enemy plane upon a densely populated district. One explodes in a shower of red-hot splinters, one of which penetrates your brain; the other lets loose a cloud of gas which chokes your lungs. Is there a difference in respect of humanity or inhumanity? If so, I am unable to perceive it.

Let us accept the fact that war is a bestial horror entailing, as it does, a sustained effort on the part of each side to try to impose its will by force upon the other side—by any kind of force. Broadly speaking, force is of two kinds. The first, direct: you try to kill off as many of the other side as you possibly can—this is called victory in the field. The other, indirect: you try to depress or terrify as many of the other side as you possibly can in order that they may no longer make the effort which is necessary to win victory in the field—this is called victory over morale.

Anything which in war assists a victory in either field is legitimate, springing, as it does, from the logic of war. Conversely, any attempt to make war gentlemanly, to ensure that it shall be conducted according to rules, fails, and always has failed, precisely because it is illogical. One of the reasons why we protest against the use of

poison gas is that it is an additional weapon for the destruction of civilians. Poison gas brings us all into the front line. But, in theory, we are all in the front line already. Poison gas, then, is merely an additional weapon employed against those who are already in the front line. It merely underlines what we already know—namely, that the distinction between combatants and non-combatants has gone by the board.

Again, it is denounced because it is a weapon for use against women and children, I might retort that so, too, are high-explosives and incendiary bombs. One can see why, from the point of view of the enemy, the destruction of a woman is more important than the destruction of a man, for to kill off the enemy's manhood is not necessary to exterminate him—since one man and 20 women can replenish the race almost as effectively as 20 men and 20 women, whereas one woman and 20 men are no more effective from the point of view of the replenishment of the population than one woman and one man. (Herein, presumably, is to be found the ultimate biological reason for the protection and segregation of women, and their withdrawal from the more obvious positions of danger.)

But already there are bombs that strike at women equally with men, nor, apart from the biological consideration which I have just mentioned, can I see that a woman or a child is intrinsically more valuable, or that a woman's or a child's life is intrinsically more important, or that the pain and suffering of a woman or a child is intrinsically worse than the pain or suffering of a man.

Callousness in wartime

One of the major consequences of war is that it accustoms us to accept violence and cruelty as part of the natural order of things. We do not react as we used to do to the horrors in the world. The

mind instinctively raises a barrier as a protection against being overwhelmed by horror piled upon horror. And it is this barrier which makes us increasingly callous. It is like a cover or 'calloused' patch which the sensitive skin grows to protect itself.

Callousness, I think, is rarely an active quality; but in so far as it is active, war, of course, foments it. In the last war I remember vegetarians, who would go out of their way to avoid passing a butcher's shop, cheerfully sticking their bayonets into the bellies of Germans, digging them in, and turning them round without turning a hair in the process—a growth here of active callousness.

More often it is simply lack of imagination. Most of us think that pain and suffering are only important when they happen in the same geographical area as that which we happen to inhabit. Thus, a pitiful and compassionate woman, who dissolves in ecstasies of woeful tenderness over a dog who is run over in a street, will read unmoved that a million peasants have perished from famine owing to the flooding of the Yellow River in China, and walk about in furs obtained through the torture and slow death of animals imprisoned in steel traps, without the slightest feeling of incongruity. The sufferings from the famine and the furs are a thousand times greater than the suffering of the dog; but China and Canada are on the other side of the world, and the dog is in the same street.

Similarly, in war-time. Let a calamity be on a sufficiently large scale and we are unable to comprehend it through lack of imagination. Then the sufferings of a million seem to us to be no greater than the sufferings of one—less, indeed, if the suffering of 'the one' takes place under our noses.

Herein, if you like, is to be found the barrier which the mind instinctively erects in order to protect the civilised consciousness from a lethal overdose of horror. We are numbed and anæsthetised, for fear we feel too much. No doubt the barrier is for most of us a necessary protection of our sanity; yet in all ages there have been

some who have had the strength to know, to feel, and to take upon themselves all the tragedy of humanity.

Among these are numbered, I think, the very greatest of our species. They are men who are born, as it were, with a spiritual skin too few, and feel everybody's toothache as if it were their own. It is no accident, I suggest, that the greatest sages and teachers of humanity – Buddha, for example; Christ – and may I include Gandhi? – have all been pacifists, insisting that the suffering of mankind here and now were of more importance than any political gains which by suffering might be achieved. They are distinguished from the rest of us by virtue of the impartiality of their outlook. Suffering in China as well as in England, suffering of animals as well as of humans, suffering even of Germans – all these seem to them equally deplorable. And so they have all taught that violence is always a sin, and that if it is inflicted upon us we must not seek to resist it with a similar violence. These, the least callous of mankind, have also been the strongest, in that they have been able to face the sum of human misery and pain without insisting on erecting the barrier to screen it.

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The revenge motive in war

This growth of callousness is one of the contributory causes of popular outcries for vengeance, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

If a dog bites my behind, am I to bite him in the same place? And how do I *show* my superiority to the dog if I do bite him in the same place? It seems to me to be a poor way to demonstrate your disapproval of the enemy's conduct to imitate it. Surely we can do better than that. Isn't it, indeed, precisely the superiority of the doctrine of the New Testament to that of the Old that the New

says *not* 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' but, in effect, mercy, compassion, forgiveness.

I suggest we should do well to remember another Biblical quotation " 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord, 'I will repay'." Like most of the precepts of religion, this is also sound practical common sense.

I suppose I must put it that way, because to praise a course of action on grounds of morality, or religion, has become hopelessly old-fashioned. In order to commend it, one has to show that it is expedient as well as right; so I suppose it is not enough for me to point out that it is a poor way of showing your indignant horror at a course of action to propose to emulate it. Though how, I should like to know, if one does emulate it, is one to show oneself superior to what one so justly reprobates in the Japanese?

But why *is* the policy of no vengeance 'sound practical common sense'? For two reasons, the first that revenge sets up a vicious circle of outrage, a cycle of ever-increasing horror. The Japanese, savages armed by Science, commit appalling atrocities; we revenge ourselves upon the Japanese, and they, in their turn, revenge themselves for the vengeance which we have taken upon them, with the result that after a series of 'nosedives' into increasing depths of barbarism, we end up with our civilisation in ruins about us.

What we must do is not to revenge ourselves on the Japanese but to put it out of their power to perpetrate similar horrors in the future. Now it is not clear that you do this by yielding to the temptation to take vengeance in the present. Not clear, that is to say, that if a mad dog bites me in the leg the best way to restrain him is to bite him in the leg.

This brings up the second reason. I am no strategist, but it seems only too likely that we might be deflected by a desire for immediate revenge from the strategy best calculated to win the war; such a strategy must, it is obvious, be far-flung and long-sighted; it must look to remote objectives, consider the world as a whole. Now if we are stung by the desire for revenge into immediate impulsive action

we may torpedo that plan. For example, we might be led further to disperse our perilously scattered forces or to attack Japan itself before we are strong enough to do so successfully.

War and genius

People seem to think that war raises the human temperature not only in matters of violence and wickedness, but in everything else. Thus some people imagine that during wars more babies of genius are born than during peace time, and in support of this odd theory quote the year 1809 during the Napoleonic Wars which saw the birth of Abraham Lincoln, Gladstone, Tennyson, Charles Darwin and Mendelssohn.

What nonsense this is! It is clear to me that we do not know the cause of the birth of great men who come, it is obvious, straight from heaven, blowing like the wind where it listeth. That being so, their coming clearly cannot be influenced by events on earth, or rather by what will be the events on earth a quarter of a century hence. I hope the point of this is clear. A great man is no use to the times in which he is born, but may be to the times in which he grows up, 20 odd years later.

Now, I believe that the future, since it doesn't yet exist, cannot affect the past. I also believe that the future is not determined, but is open to us to make it as we please. I do not, therefore, see how the crises of the future can possibly affect the characters of the babies born 20 odd years before the future eventuates. And, anyway, what possible effect could a musician like Mendelssohn, or a biologist like Darwin have either upon the sort of crises in which they were born, or the great political crisis over the Reform Bill in 1832, 23 years later. What have musicians to do with Reform Bills, or biologists with military strategy?

So much for general principles. As to the facts, you get constella-

tions of great men born in quiet times, and vice-versa. For example, the year 1685 saw the birth of three first-rate musicians, J. S. Bach, Handel and the younger Scarlatti, but in Europe 1685 was, for once, a year of comparative quietude.

Now think of all the colossal crises in the history of nations which, so far as we can see, produced nobody of first-class merit at all. Think of the break-up of the Roman Empire, the destruction of the Turkish Empire, the invasion and destruction of most of Europe by the Mongols under Genghiz Khan, not to speak of the thousands of unknown crises in the history of all the world from China to Peru and from the North Pole to the South, which apparently threw up no great men at all, since we have never heard of them.

What about the crisis of 1914? A big one if you like. That was 31 years ago, and a number of great men born therein should be now flourishing. But they're not. Broadly speaking, there are no great composers, poets, writers, statesmen, philosophers, or generals now in their late twenties and early thirties.

The belief that crises produce great men presumably designed to deal with and overcome them is a modern version of the ancient cry for a saviour. It is a pleasant illusion with which we all like to comfort ourselves in the hope that we can remove the responsibility for saving the world from our own shoulders on to those of some mythical great man whom nature, God or Providence, or whoever or whatever it is you believe in, will be graciously pleased to send us.



Ex-service men

Who am I that I should indulge myself in the temptation to give good advice to ex-Service men and women, demobbed, and about to re-enter civilian life? I am not in the Forces and shan't, therefore, be leaving them, and I am not young. I notice that old men tend to give young men good advice only when they can no longer

give them bad examples. I would like to think I was not quite old enough for that. Anyway, my generation has not made such a good job of things that we can afford to tell the young how to do things better. All this having been said, I proceed to give advice.

I ask myself, first, what we were fighting for. Freedom, we were told, and independence. I believe it. The other day I went into a restaurant at breakfast time. A young soldier was sitting at a table, the waitress brought him the menu and asked him what he wanted. He seemed worried and perplexed. The first choice was between porridge and some one or other of those dried-up cereal foods that one gets in boxes and cartons. This simple decision was too much for him. 'Oh, I don't know,' he said, 'bring me what the others are having.'

I was properly shocked, concluded that four years in the Army had taken away his power of choice, asked myself whether we are ants or sheep that we should only ask to do what others do, reminded myself that it was precisely against this antlike and sheeplike mentality that we were fighting, and drew the moral—the first thing a soldier should do on returning to civilian life is to regain his freedom of choice, his independence of mind, enter into possession of his soul, and insist on being an individual.

An ideal war memorial

The questions of demobilisation and the rehabilitation of the individual bring to my mind another problem connected with the end of a war. Are we to erect more obelisks, more statues, more stained glass windows in memory of our dead? Or are we to break with tradition?

In wars it is primarily the young men who suffer and die, and the ideal war memorial should, therefore, be something that young people can enjoy. It should not, therefore, be a monument; it

should not be something which is subject to changing tastes and fashions, so that future ages can look back and wonder that we could have perpetrated anything so ugly; it should not glorify war or even remind people of war. (This rules out the presentation of tanks to towns; it also rules out memorials carved with the names of the lads of the village who died for their country.) It should not be linked up with religion and invoke God's blessing upon the war which was responsible for so much pain, as if we were trying to make God an accomplice in *our* wickedness.

What, then, should it be? It should aim, I think, at saving for the enjoyment of the people some part of the English countryside which was being destroyed so rapidly before the war. Trees can be planted; pieces of coast may be preserved; a lovely old house purchased; above all, some large tract of wild country might be set aside and dedicated to youth. Natural scenery should be preserved and every facility given for adventure, climbing, swimming, camping, riding, which young people love and which develops their bodies and brings them friends, as a substitute for the military training, which brings young people to their death. In other words, the best war memorial is a National Park.

I have been reproached recently for saying 'as a substitute for military training.' The question of National Parks is, of course, irrelevant to the issue of military training after the war. If I had my way I would take all young people between 17 and 18 and give them physical training in the broadest sense of the word on County Badge or Boy Scouts lines. Using the many camps, aerodromes, workshops, hostels, boarding schools, and so on which now exist in wild and lovely parts of the country, and housing young people there for a year at Government expense as part of their education.

Science and frontiers

I am not going to make any attempt to prophesy the future, or to try to prescribe the conditions for the maintenance of world peace and hence for the survival of civilisation.

I merely want to point out one result of the scientific developments of our times and to draw from them one conclusion. Science to-day has made nonsense of political frontiers. Now what do frontiers do? They divide States from States; they are bound up, therefore, with nationalism, by which I mean the division of the world into a number of separate, sovereign, national States, each with its own army, navy, air force, and foreign policy; each with its own history books containing its own special national lie about history; each with its own Dictionary of National Biography claiming all discoveries for its own great men; each with its own peasant costume and folklore, exactly like all the other peasant costumes and folklores; and each with its trained generation of armed young men disciplined and eager in its service to destroy the equally trained and disciplined generation of armed young men across its frontier whenever it, or the dictator who has got control of it, thinks that war will be to its advantage.

Now science has altered all that. The invention of the aeroplane, not to mention V1s and V2s and the coming 3s and 4s, and the atomic bomb has already made the conception of the small State impossible. It is only by coming under the umbrella of big States that the small State can survive as it is. If our civilisation is to go on at all, it will sooner or later make the conception of the big State impossible.

There are at least four reasons why this is so. Frontiers made sense when you could walk or even drive for three or four days and remain within the frontiers of the same State. They make nonsense when in an aeroplane you can fly in six hours over the boundaries of half a dozen.

They made sense when States proceeded against one another by armies and navies. The navies are stopped by coast lines, armies could be stopped by fortified frontiers. They make nonsense with the arrival of the bombing 'plane, the flying bomb, the long range rocket, the atomic bomb, and the radio, whose voice travels from one end of the world to the other:

Thirdly, the effect of modern science has been to abolish distance. It takes me a shorter time to travel from London to New York than it took my grandfather to travel from York to London. As distance is abolished the world contracts, growing smaller and smaller. Let me use a metaphor. Think of the Nation States as a lot of sleepers in a vast bed. The bed contracts and contracts, and the sleepers are jostled more and more uncomfortably one on top of the other until there is a row and somebody is kicked out on the floor. In other words, there is a war. This precisely is what has happened in the world to-day, and will continue to happen as States are thrown into ever closer and more uncomfortable relations with each other by the shrinking of distance.

Lastly, I believe that sooner or later the political map of the world conforms to the framework of circumstances in which men live. To begin with, men could only travel a few miles in any direction; and there were tribes. Then their radius was increased to a few hundred, and there were duchies, cantons and counties; then to a thousand or so, and there were States—a very recent invention these last. You can read in Shaw's play 'Saint Joan' what difficulties Joan had in getting her soldiers to think of France. Picardy, Gascony and Burgundy they knew. But France, what was that? A mere figment! Yet that was only 500 years ago. Similarly the fact that men can travel from one end of the earth to the other in an aeroplane will mean ultimately the end of the Nation State.

In my view the future structure of our civilisation, if it is to go on

at all, will be federal in form; for example as in the United States, where a number of different States come together under a single Government for foreign affairs, defence, trade, and so on, while retaining their own self-government for purely national affairs.

The Post-war World

Freedom.

President Roosevelt laid down four freedoms which he would have liked to see established in the post-war world—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear. Vital, necessary, all these, and yet there still remain dozens more freedoms that I would like to see established. People's lives seem to me to be hedged round by all sorts of unnecessary restrictions and taboos, which diminish pleasure, promote pain, militate against health and are an offence against reason.

I could instance, for example, freedom of drinking hours, never having been able to understand why a man should not be able to have a drink when he wants one, or freedom of clothes, the clothes of males in this country being an offence both against beauty and reason. They are too heavy, too hot, and too dark. Oh for the freedom for males to come out in bright colours in the evening, in silks and satins and brocades and tights, instead of donning their uniforms of funereal black. Oh for the freedom to wear no ties on hot days in City offices, to dispense with the little black boxes perched on our heads called bowlers, or the black cloth bags called felt hats, or the hard white cylinders called collars.

But there will be no end to it if I go on like this. Let me then select three freedoms which strike me as especially important. Firstly, freedom to die at my own hand. Secondly, freedom to die, if I wish to, by the hand of another. In other words, legalised suicide and

legalised easy death. The same principles apply to both. I never asked for life, I was pitchforked into it without so much as a by-your-leave, being given no choice in the matter of the age, or the country, or the social class in which I should be born, or the parents to whom I should be born. I cannot, therefore, for the life of me understand why I should be regarded to continue living this life, for which I never opted, when it has become more of a nuisance to me than it is worth.

Similarly with the right to easy death. With what hypocrisy does our civilisation devote all its time, money, and its effort to depriving of life young men in the prime of life, who ask nothing better than to survive and cling to life with all the intensity of healthy young animals, and yet withholds the boon of easy death from old and failing bodies, from bodies wracked with pain and disabled by disease, on the ground that — On what ground? I really don't know. On the ground, presumably, that God gave life, and God should therefore take it away. The ground is denied a hundred thousand times every day of the war. Yet not only do we deprive the sufferer of the right of easy death when he wants it, but we waste the time of young and healthy people, who want to be going about their own business, in looking after him.

My third freedom would be freedom of access to the wild places—the mountains, the moorlands, and the coastlines of this, to my mind, the most beautiful land in the world.

There are many men who identify the good life with the depriving of other creatures of life, and demand the wide open spaces of the moors in order that they may the more easily insert pieces of metal from secure distances into the bodies of defenceless birds. That this sport may be pursued, many square miles of moorland and mountain are closed to the public. Thus huge tracts of this land of England for which men are told they are fighting are withheld, with all their potential benefits in the way of health and recreation, from work-worn citizens for the sake of the selfish pleasures of a few rich men.

Post-war reconstruction—and the countryside

Of course, there are plans for dealing with this very problem. The Reports of the Scott and Uthwatt Committees, for example, contain recommendations designed to protect the face of England so that the town shall remain town and the country, country. One of their objects is to control the development of cities. Here, they say, in effect, there is to be town; here factories; here residential areas; here undeveloped agricultural land; here wild places. The Uthwatt Committee recommends the purchase now by public authority of what are called the development rights in land which may be threatened with building after the War. It is our business as citizens to bring pressure on the Government to give effect to the recommendations of this Committee.

The ideal is obvious enough. It is, I repeat, that towns should be towns, and country, country. Before the war we were in danger of destroying both, and substituting a single suburban sprawl, straggling amorphously from Watford to the coast. Exploded by the facilities for cheap transport, the motor-bus, electric suburban train, the cheap private car, our towns burst like bombs, and scattered their debris far and wide across the countryside. Trees were cut down as though they had been an army of hostile giants, while the green face of England was covered by a scurf of red villas, for all the world as if the land had caught measles and come out in an inflamed rash. Everywhere new roads gashed the surface of the countryside, like weals left by the whip-lash of civilisation. Such was the situation.

Well now, what about it? It seems to me essential that this process of the suburbanisation of England must stop. We have at last come to realise that a community that has no roots in the soil is lop-sided. For three generations four-fifths of the inhabitants of England have been deprived of their natural heritage in the countryside of England, but we all of us have an instinctive craving for country sights and sounds. Assisted by the same revolution in cheap transport to

which I have referred, young men and women were beginning in their hundreds and thousands to seek the satisfaction of that craving, and the fulfilment of that need in country walking.

This, I think, was a wholly good thing. England has the ugliest towns and the loveliest countryside of any nation in the world. It was to the credit of the modern generation that it discovered the fact, and, turning its back upon the industrial horrors with which its fathers disgraced the north of England, sought in increasing numbers rest and recreation of the spirit in the country. Thus hiking had begun to replace beer as the shortest cut out of Manchester.

Now we must not, by allowing our towns to sprawl broadcast over the countryside, destroy the very conditions which are necessary for the spiritual health of the people.

But there is another point. We must never allow agriculture to lapse into its pre-war neglect. For the moment the process of eating up the land of England has stopped. The jerry builder and the bungaloid begetter can get neither bricks nor concrete, and the process of exploiting the beauty that belongs to us all for the gain of the jerry-building few has been checked.

We must see to it that the process is never allowed to restart. We know to-day that if the influences which were ruling England before the war are to be stopped, this England must be planned as a whole.

This means that we cannot leave the job to local authorities who have neither the powers nor the vision for the job. The planning of England—here industry, there shops; here suburbs, there villages; here arable, there pasture; here, above all, national parks to be preserved for the rest and recreation of the people among wild life and unspoiled country—all this can be achieved only by a Government department with full executive powers.

Whether plans of this kind remain pious aspirations or not depends upon us. After the war is over there is generally reaction and a cold fit, and Governments admittedly tend to forget the promises which

they made. H. A. L. Fisher records that if he had not got the principle of his 1918 Education Bill accepted in the last year of the war, he would never have succeeded afterwards. The moral is obvious.

—*And the individual*

I began this chapter by rehearsing Roosevelt's four freedoms for the post-war world. Two of them, you will remember, are freedom from want and freedom from fear. We have the means for achieving these at hand in a contributory insurance scheme under which the assistance you obtain from the State is something to which you yourself have contributed in the days of your comparative affluence.

Now, it is all nonsense to suggest, as some do, that such a scheme would sap men's independence and initiative, that the receipt of money that one has not earned, of what used to be called charity, is necessarily demoralising. It is an argument I have often seen used about the poor; rarely, if ever, about the rich. I am not rich, but I have a little money invested, and, having carefully looked into my psychology in order to detect a weakening of initiative or a sapping of independence every time I draw a dividend, I can find no evidence for either. I am a poor example of a rich man. But what are we to say about those who live entirely on income derived from capital that they have not earned? Have they neither independence nor initiative?

But I repudiate the whole suggestion of demoralisation. Work is the only occupation that human beings can stand in all but the smallest doses, and the suggestion that if we were supported by the State we would none of us do a hand's turn of work again has no warrant either in history or psychology.

Similarly with the spirit of adventure. Broadly speaking, adventure is bred not of the empty belly but of the full. To quote Sir William

‘Beveridge’ ‘This talk about want being necessary for adventure is nonsense. Adventure comes not through the half-starved, but from those who are full of beans.’

Consider, for example, the British Empire. The British Empire is a monument to the spirit of adventure, but the men who fared across the world to make it—the Drakes, the Frobishers, the Clives, the Wolfes, the Captain Cooks—were not starving men, but, bursting with the energy that comes of good nourishment. It has been said that the British Empire is partly due to our system of inheritance. On the Continent a man’s estate is usually divided up between his sons. In England the custom is for the eldest son to inherit the lot and the youngest son goes portionless, so he goes out to chance his arm and make his fortune as adventurer or immigrant. The British Empire is the result. Or he goes into the Church.

Again, revolutions are not made by the starving, but by people who have something to eat but not quite enough, and see others well fed. If you are starving you think only about your next meal, and where it is to come from. Or consider the psychology of tramps—you will find it admirably described in George Orwell’s ‘Down and Out in Paris and London.’ If you live on bread, margarine and tea and sleep in a ‘spike’ you don’t think about politics, still less about revolutions. What you do think about is where you can go for your next dollop of margarine, bread, and tea. Want, in fact, takes the revolutionary edge off poverty.

National Services—A national health service

Prominent among the blue-prints for the post-war world is the National Health Service scheme, a scheme which has aroused bitter opposition amongst members of the medical profession. Not being a doctor, I am all in favour of doctors being paid servants of the State. The State alone is capable of imposing adequate standards

of supervision. School masters are inspected, and so are Civil Servants. Why not doctors? I have often been told that in remote districts, in mining districts for example, some doctors, driven beside themselves by loneliness and lack of congenial society, spend most of their lives in a state of semi-drunkenness. I have never met anything of the kind myself, but I have read Cronin's books. Anyway, it seems to me all too likely. But whether likely or not, it is the State's business to ensure adequate minimum standards of medical attention; it can only do this if the State runs the Medical Service.

Moreover it seems unlikely that the private practice of the old school will be possible after the war. The private practitioner must have somebody to answer his telephone. He cannot condemn his wife to have her ear glued to the receiver, and he must, therefore, have a maid. It is highly doubtful whether there will be enough maids to go round after the war.

Moreover, general practitioners are increasingly being superseded by specialists. Many G.P.s are unable to treat your complaint adequately, even if they are able to diagnose it correctly. What they do is to send you on to a specialist or a hospital. Most of them, in fact, are no better than pillar boxes in which you post the letter of your disease and have it forwarded to the specialist.

But what is even worse is that the present system also puts a premium upon elaborate treatment. Suppose I have a pain in my tummy. Let us further suppose there are two possible causes of my pain, X and Y. I can be cured with a dose of liver salts, if it is X; if it is Y I shall have to go to a nursing home, undergo an expensive operation and pay fees to the home, to the nurses, the surgeon, and the doctor. Now if I am rich, under the present system it is to everybody's interest to say that it is Y and not X, that is to say, I give doctors an incentive to cut open my tummy instead of giving me a dose of liver salts:

None of this, by the way, applies to panel doctors, who normally have too many patients to have any incentive to prescribe elaborate

treatments, nor does the amount of their salary depend upon the elaborateness of the treatment.

If all doctors were State doctors, there would be enough to ensure that we all had adequate attention and adequate treatment, while the arrangements for attending to us—the queue, the office, the waiting-room—would be improved out of all recognition.

Under a State service half a dozen doctors with different qualifications and talents would be gathered together at a single clinic, and their pooled knowledge and experience would enable them to deal with almost any disease that came along. If State clinics, then also State hospitals. After all, the maintenance of health and the avoidance of disease are really matters for society as a whole. The State recognises this in regard to the prevention of disease by insisting on the maintenance of adequate standards of sanitation, by quarantine regulations, and by inoculating soldiers serving overseas, or citizens in a small-pox epidemic. If the prevention of disease is the business of the State so is its diagnosis, and so too is its treatment. If all doctors were paid servants of the State we should be more concerned to maintain a high standard of health.

Let me tell you a parable. In China before the Chinese Revolution a policeman's salary depended upon the number of prisoners that he arrested. If they were convicted there was a bonus. If there were no crimes and, therefore, no criminals, the policeman starved.

What follows? That policemen were driven to commit crimes themselves, subsequently to arrest innocent citizens, torture them until they had confessed to the crimes which the policemen had committed and so, by securing an arrest and a conviction, draw their pay. Or dispensing with the crime altogether, the policeman would arrest a chance passer-by, torture him until he had confessed to a non-existent crime, and so draw his pay as before.

We can see how silly that is, yet surely precisely the same system obtains in regard to doctors. If we were all well all the time doctors would starve, therefore it pays them, and we pay them, to keep us

ill. Not very ill, because if patients were very ill some of them would die and doctors would lose patients, and therefore, fees. So the present system puts a premium upon minor illnesses with many medical attendances. It gives doctors an economic interest in ensuring that most of us shall be rather but not *very* ill. What could be more absurd?

Worth noting, by the way, that since the war, when everybody is busy, too busy in fact, to be ill, and when many doctors have been called into the Forces and the few, therefore, that remain have more than enough patients to go round, there has been a marked diminution in unimportant illnesses. People only call in doctors to-day when they really need them.

Now, we can all see that it is wrong to give people a vested interest in crime. Is the principle so very different in the case of disease?

I conclude that we ought to aim at preventing rather than curing disease, and we shall not successfully do that while we make a doctor's livelihood dependent upon the existence of disease; that we should pay all doctors a salary which is not dependent upon the number of patients they treat, or the number of diseases which have to be treated, and they will no longer have an interest in keeping us all slightly ill, and that we should enrol all doctors as State servants with conditions of service and pension modelled on those obtaining in the Civil Service.

You could make a group of doctors responsible for the health of all the people living in their district, and although it might be a little hard to reduce their salary if illness is increased, it would be perfectly logical to increase their salary if illness is diminished. In other words, promote a doctor according to his success in keeping people well, and thereby rendering himself superfluous.

A national home help service ?

If not a National Health Service, why not, somebody wanted to know, a National Home Help Service, as suggested by Mr. Ivor Thomas, with the conscription of girls for domestic service after the War? For once, I don't know what the right answer is. I start off with a prejudice, the strongest possible, in favour of freedom. I hate conscription of any kind and for any purpose. I have never worn a top hat; indeed, the only time I ever attempted the feat the result was so alarming that everybody who had any connection with me insisted on having the thing not only removed but burnt, for fear of imperilling the public safety if I yielded to the temptation to put it on again. But if legislation were passed against wearing top hats, or insisting upon the wearing of felts, I should immediately feel it my duty to come out in a topper.

Rules, broadly, are made by old people for the sake of young people, in order to prevent the young people from annoying the old people by behaving like young people. Thus the old insist that the young should be educated—highly unnatural to the young—that they should go and fight and kill other young people—natural, perhaps, but how undesirable—or that they should stay at home and help mother or somebody else's mother, when they ought to be enjoying themselves or developing their personalities, or going out with the boys—or the girls, as the case may be.

Regimentation of the young is hateful. Young people have the right of all young growing things to develop in their own way, to play about with life, to experiment, to stretch their intellectual and spiritual limbs, to make fools of themselves if need be, to taste any drink once, and to sow their wild oats hoping that they may prove nutritious in middle age.

From the time that we are 20 the cares of a career, or marriage, a home, children, clamp down upon us, with the result that our lives,

instead of being lived spontaneously and freely, are at the beck and service to the very last possible moment.

All this is against conscription. But look at the other side! First, Ivor Thomas is a wise man, and I gainsay him with the greatest circumspection. Secondly, after the war there is to be conscription for young men to cover a period of military training from 18 to 19, with perhaps a period of pre-military training (17 to 18) in camps, where as glorified Boy Scouts they will learn hardship, endurance, tennis, sport, and all the rest of the Boy Scout virtues—in riding, shooting, swimming, and climbing.

I am told further, that we are to extend education to 16, and that if the young are clever we are to go on educating them up to 18 or 19, or even 22, at the expense of the community. I myself am in favour of educating them until they are 22 at the expense of the community.

If, then, one is conscripting young males for training in the art of war, if one is conscripting young intellectuals for the cultivation of their minds and the sharpening of their talents, with what logic can one resist the conscripting of young females for the work which is most naturally appropriate to them, the work of helping in the home and looking after men and children, which is, after all, what all women do some of the time, and most women all the time. So, granted military service for males, granted compulsory education for the clever, then, in all fairness, we must accept Ivor Thomas's suggestion for young females, subject, however, to one safeguard.

I look back on my own Victorian childhood, the golden days of servants, or rather of mistresses, when the poor "slavey," living in a basement or a semi-basement kitchen, full of bugs and black beetles, was at her mistress's beck and call for 24 hours out of the 24, with half a day out a fortnight or, at the most, a week. Even then she had to be in by dark, and what a fuss there was if the young man who had seen her home came into the kitchen. Mistresses, it will be remembered, forbade followers. How the mis-

call of duties and responsibilities. I dare say it must be so, but, for my part, I want to put off this time of responsibility, duty and tresses abused their power. How they threw their weight about! What cats they were! Never should this position be allowed to return. Never again should such power be placed in the hands of women over younger women,

So, if there is to be a home help service the girls must be safeguarded against domestic tyranny, by being permitted to live away from the homes in which they help. I can see a corps of young women living in a hostel under the control of a Local Authority. The harassed housewife rings up the authority for a girl to come to help her between 9 and 1 in the morning, in which case she is given her dinner; or between 6 and 9 in the evening, in which case she is given her supper.

In fact, she will engage a domestic help as she now gets a nurse, or a midwife. But just as the nurse and the midwife are not under her control and are only temporarily in her employment for a special purpose, so a domestic help would be controlled, employed, and, if necessary, paid not by the mistress but by the Local Authority.

Some plans for transport — The roads

Regarding the invention of the internal combustion engine as the greatest single disaster in the history of mankind, I would like to see motor traffic, if it can't be stopped altogether, strictly controlled and regulated, so as to prevent accidents on the roads. They are, of course, appalling, running in peace-time to an average of about 6,500 killed and 227,000 injured annually on the roads of England and Wales alone.

This casualty rate bears particularly hardly on children. The Education Officer of the London County Council has recently

estimated that one out of every 12 boys born in London meets with a road accident before reaching the age of 14. At one time during the war, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of War Transport pointed out that whereas the total number of war casualties (killed and wounded) in all the armed forces had been 370,000 up to date, the total number of road casualties due to motors in this country since the beginning of the war was 588,000.

However, in fairness, it must be added that while the Germans *killed* 140,000, the car killed only 39,000.*

In peace-time by far the greater number of those killed and injured are the victims of private cars. It won't help matters, I am afraid, to widen our roads, to make them straighter, to by-pass towns or to carry out any of the other devices by which it is proposed to make the world easy and agreeable for motorists, since these devices will only enable motor-cars to travel faster than they did before. The experiences in America, where the roads go like arrows from horizon to horizon and are as wide as squares, prove, I think, fairly conclusively that the easier you make things for motorists the more people they kill and injure, the American figures being even more alarming than ours.

This being so, I, personally, have not the slightest doubt that the only way to put an end to the holocaust is to increase the number of public transport vehicles (buses, because they are properly driven and go at a comparatively reasonable speed, kill and injure very few), allow private cars to doctors and, conceivably—I am not sure about this—Cabinet Ministers and forbid them to everybody else. I am convinced that if this reform were adopted the increase in human happiness would be very great.

Let us get it clearly into our heads that the cause of the deaths and injuries is speed, noting that in the centres of our large towns, where cars have to go very slowly, because there are so many of them, the casualties are comparatively small. The only other thing, then, is to hope that the number of cars will be so increased that they will be

* Here is a later figure. June, 1945. The total number of road deaths during the war period to the end of April, 1945, was 42,556. The total number of civilian casualties in the United Kingdom due to enemy action during the war was 60,585 people killed.

forced to go as slowly on the roads of the country as they do in the centres of our large towns. Perhaps when we all have cars, after the war, motoring will stultify itself and cars get wedged into a single stationary block.

And for the railways

I have few complaints and, therefore, few improvements to suggest for British railways. You see, I was born in the railway age. Trains, fiery monsters snorting and roaring through the night, were to me things of mystery and wonder; they put poetry and romance into life as surely the motor-car has taken them out of it. Therefore, like so many men in old middle-age, I would ask nothing better than to go back to the world of my youth in which we all rode in trains—and cars were unknown.

Of course, there are some alterations that I should like to make. There is the obvious one that when travelling, we should have reasonably cooked meals; that they should not all be taken out of tins and boxes, and that some food should be cooked on the train instead of brought ready cooked, and then warmed up on the train.

I like carriage windows to be one single whole pane of glass, through which you could look out into the country instead of divided, as they still are in most compartments, into three separate sections.

The system of mystery holiday trains might be extended with benefit, the trains in which you embark without knowing where you are going, and on which you live and have your meals for the whole week or so of the holiday.

I should also like to see a number of the small railways resurrected—some of them are toy railways—which have for one reason or another been shut down. For example, the toy railway from Boot to Ravenglass, in Cumberland; the railway that ran along the Mani-

fold Valley in Staffordshire; the railway from Beddgelert to Portmadoc that ran through the Aberglasyn Pass. All these lines went through lovely country and introduce one to scenery far better than can be viewed from a main road.

Then there is the vexed question of first and third class compartments. When there are enough trains and enough room in them, then I think there ought to be two classes, one for "the silents," and one for "the talkers." This is partly an age division. The old want to sit quiet, read their books, doze and glare at each other; the young want to talk, and young men, in particular, want to pick up pretty girls. In my young days when girls were supposed to avoid smoking carriages, the perennial question, when one was about to get on a train was: 'Shall I go into a smoker and enjoy the manly pleasure of smoking, or shall I go into a non-smoker on the chance of talking to a pretty girl?'

The division between 'silents' and talkers is partly one of types of work. I see too many people in my daily life and don't have enough time to read or time to myself, so I look forward to a train journey—at least I did before the war—when I can be quiet and nobody can get at me. If there are 'silent' carriages, nobody can begin on me with that exasperating question, 'Aren't you Mr. Joad? I thought I knew your face.' Which opens up vistas of conversation which may last for hours. Or, being overworked, I very often have to write.

Now, for these things, I want quiet. At present the only way to get quiet is to pay extra for it, and therefore I would still have first and third classes. The discrimination between them would, at present, have to be on a monetary basis, but, under an ideal system, I would have one class for those who want to be silent and another for those who don't mind talking. I would charge the same for both, and my proportion would be one 'silent' to six 'talkers.'

Non-smoking carriages should, of course, be retained. Other people's smoke is disgusting to some people at all times, and to all

people at some time; to me, for example, if I am suffering from a sore and irritable throat, expressing itself in a continual liability to painful and tearing coughing at the slightest provocation, which causes me to make straight for a non-smoking carriage.

I am sorry for those who can't or won't smoke. It is Puritanism, a simple denying to themselves of pleasure because it *is* pleasure. If so, for once they cannot claim the sanction of religion for their self-denial, for, as Samuel Butler remarks somewhere, God did not allow tobacco to be discovered earlier because He knew that, if He had done so, St. Paul would certainly have forbidden its use.

But I am still sorrier for non-smokers who, being affected and afflicted by this bitter deprivation of a pleasure that most of us enjoy, are liable at any moment since the war to be subject in their non-smoking carriage to the intrusion of half a dozen soldiers puffing Virginia cigarettes in their faces.

I am always answering questions, but here, incidentally, are two to which I would like to know the answers.

First of all, why should the war have completely abrogated the ordinary courtesies of travelling, of which disregard of the comfort of non-smokers is an example?

And secondly, why will cigarette smokers—as an inveterate pipe smoker I hate the smell of cheap Virginia cigarettes—insist on holding them in their fingers for several minutes at a time so that the smoke, instead of being wafted into the nose of the smoker, who presumably likes it, is carried into the eyes and nose of his nextdoor neighbour, who presumably does not, and as often as not has gone into a non-smoking compartment in order to avoid it?

Having strayed into smoke from British railways in the post-war world, I come back to them to make one more suggestion. This is that railway travel should be free. I cannot see why we should be charged for travelling about the country's railway system any more than for breathing its air, for drinking its water, or for walking or

cycling on its roads. Let all the railways be run by the State and paid for by the taxpayer, and let the taxpayer ride free on them whenever he so desires.

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