The Vanguard American

Published monthly by
The Vanguard Guild
Kimballton, Iowa
Holger J. Koch, Editor

Vol. II, No. 3 Subscription Price $1.00 per year MARCH, 1946

Course and Tangent

HOLGER J. KOCH.

We are gradually making the discovery that it is possible to "enjoy" a high standard of living and be thoroughly unhappy at the same time. If being well-fed and clothed is a prerequisite to being a moral, social and happy human being—as we have been told again and again—then we should now have in this country a great middle and upper class of people, by income standards, who are sufficiently free from economic fear and physical exhaustion to create a social and cultural life free of jealousies and want.

Such is not the case. In spite of our war-created prosperity—undreamed of ten years ago—we are now bedeviled by more problems arising from a break-down of moral social standards than ever before. Now that we can afford to be generous and considerate and co-operative because our physical welfare is secure, we have inaugurated an orgy of mutual suspicion, recrimination, irritation and general ill-will that makes our social and national life a grief and a burden to us and a sorry spectacle to the world. As a nation we are unhappy, frustrated and restless.

We may hate ourselves for it because we know that by all the accepted standards we should be happy and unselfish and brotherly. But we can't help it. Our new-found affluence just didn't affect us that way.

So we may as well make up our minds, that it isn't wealth we either need or want. At least not if we want to be happy and live at peace with ourselves and in harmony and co-operation with our fellows. Obviously this accomplishment has no connection with our ability to earn, beg or steal a high income.

The reason may be that spiritual well-being has only one medium of exchange: the gift. Insofar as we are dependent on our fellow-men, and they on us, for this boon, we need to establish a condition of mutual, unstinting generosity. The person next to us may be slowly starving to death—for all his opulence—because we haven't the heart to hand him a crust of spiritual bread.

I realize, in a much too impersonal way, that people are starving for bread all over the world. I wish they could be fed and I want to help; but a thousand times worse is the spiritual starvation in impoverished and prosperous countries alike; greater, perhaps, in prosperous countries, where we think no help is needed because people are well fed!

I can see why charitable organizations should work their hands to the bone to feed the needy in every continent, but I can't for the life of me see why they should overlook the appalling spiritual destitution on their own door steps. Where there is no love, little mercy, little beauty and laughter in human lives the problem of poverty will go on and on and on. To attempt to alleviate physical hunger without establishing a genuine spiritual brotherhood is like pouring water into a bottomless vessel.

Such light as we shed about us is far too much like the cold, reflected light of the moon: it has no warmth. We accept in a detatched and impersonal way the tenets of brotherly love, but our hearts are not in it. The world is slowly freezing to death in the reflected light of many religions, but there is not enough warmth in it to keep the human soul alive. Unless we, like the sun, learn to radiate "live" warmth and light, then the drama of the earth is drawing to an unhappy close, and the history of man becomes 'the fever the moon died of."

We MUST retrace our steps to the point where we began signing our declarations of faith and membership pledges in ink instead of blood. We must start over again, and this time make very sure that our corporate professions do not outrun and replace individual realization.

Another reason why the atomic bomb exploded before a comparable moral and spiritual force could be released, is that while science has been anxious to disprove its own previously venerated assumptions and thereby increase its knowledge and understanding, our spiritual monitors have concentrated on preserving and perpetuating every hoary tradition, good or bad, with a loyalty that would be commendable if it weren't so tragically blind.

Small People's Eyes

SYNNØVE LARSEN BAASCH, Washington Island, Wis.

"I'm just as big for me," said he,
"As you are big for you."

(R. L. Stevenson?)

Great people look for great things. Great scientists invent Uniaks and atom-smashers, and great warmakers take the instruments out of their hands and say in a great stage-whisper:

"HUSH—S—SH! This is a secret! Somebody else might get hold of this and use it evilly! They might blow the world to pieces! They might even blow us to pieces! —(Aside:) Hush, no, we only blew a few cities to pieces!"

Great doctors have hopes to make atoms smash cancers. It would really be good if they did, although they cannot bring back to life some of those we knew. Great doctors do great good, even in a war.

Great heroes do great deeds, and great braggarts have great dreams.

All this wonderful greatness is borne of a great war. There never was such a war, as far as mans memory's record goes back The greatest, worsteset war anybody ever knew about—aren't you throwing your chest out? Think of the millions, billions, trillions in the calculations of the great men of this age, and you are their contemporary, isn't it wonderful? Think of the great words that have rolled off the great speakers' tongues, and you have heard them and read about them, such as: "Ein Held kann nur heroisch denken." "A hero can think only heroically," for example. An inspiring message from a great orator, whatever he meant by it. Small people can't even grasp the depth of a statement like that, but they can hear that it is great, just the same, and can applaud by the million,—and die. Hitler was the author of that one. "Blood and iron," by Bismarck, has quite a ring. "Sweat, blood, and tears"—Churchill SAW those.

Whose sweat and blood and tears?

—All the small people's. A braggart can think heroically, a hero goes humbly to his hard task; but the great millions which the great men sweep together for their great wars are merely a great deal of small potatoes. Not for them the laurels of the hero nor the fat words of the braggart; for them the numbered dogtags and the yielding up, together, of great quantities of sweat, and blood, and tears.

When heroes sweat and bleed and weep, we sometimes hear about it. When braggarts yield up their quota of these substances, they like to have the quantity measured and set aside for contemplation as particularly copious contributions to the current ideal. When small potatoes go through the press of war, their sweat and blood and tears are mingled and flow in such great quantities that even great people are impressed by the greatness of it. When great people contemplate the great accumulated suffering, they can't grasp it. In this they are like a small potato: he can't grasp it, either. One is all he can take in at a time, and that is plenty. His heart is calloused by too much wear, but underneath the horny shield the child sleeps, sensitive as ever, and wakes up in his dreams to a burden that is too great for one small heart.

Some small potatoes go to war, others stay at home. The ones that stay at home do not remain untouched by war's rough hand, but harden to pictures and records and bad news as a soldier hardens to battlesights. There is a steady impact of ugliness till sense is blunted. What you remember, will be the first cruelty of each kind till the pile is so great that you no longer can grasp the last and worst, but keep looking back toward the first shock, dealt you when you were fresh and unspoiled. You long back to the fine perception you once possessed, before political concepts of human happiness were dinned at you till you lost sight of the great reality which you saw in childhood:

God created a great many different things, and they were all very good. What does God demand of us, except that we live peaceably together?

Not peaceably by force, because our dictators won't have any murmurings from the rabble of small potatoes.

Not peaceably by fear, because someone else might discover my hiding place and rob me.

Not peaceably by cunning, because my neighbor might see me coming before I had the upper hand of him.

Not peaceably because we all have the same color of skin, and discount the others, nor because we educated people have good manners and know how to put the others in their place with the gesture of a true gentleman, or true lady equipped with honor, money, and position; nor yet because money talks, and the moneyless had better keep still and know who is boss.

Just peceably because we were all raised out of the same dust on this earth, and shall all return to it; especially peaceably because the same God gave us the same kind of life for a span which he set, and which we may not shorten for one another. While in this life we are beset by many wondering and sad thoughts, and by many questions to which we do not know the answers; through the ages man has puzzled out quite a few of them, but there are always more, and it would be unbearable if God had not given most of us our next of kin, as a sign that love was the most important thing in the whole setup—immeasurable to the human mind, engulfing to him who gave over completely, an aching conscience in the sinner against our common destiny of love.

Small people see these tihngs in childhood because God made them tangible and plain in the love of a cat for the kittens, or a hen with chickens peeking between its wings. Small people, in peacetime, usually have mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, and some kind of home where the very light, or the sound of a closing door, have its especial and dear personality. Each one of us little strangers to this earth have had our especial environment of assurance,—better for some than for others, through no fault by God,—but for all certainly a fleck of sunshine where a child or a dog might go asleep.

Love was the first lesson we had to learn. For the small fry, this is quite a big lesson to learn, so big that there is no more room in the little head for the subtler things. We cannot all be great scientists, and if we could,

mankind would be so conceited that God would have to destroy us—or would he? Would we then learn humility? —We should be politicians, perhaps, and thus we could take care of the destruction ourselves; God need have no bother with it.

Now we had this great war—is it over?

The small people's eyes cannot take in the whole great picture, but right now it does look as if no great improvement has been brought about anywhere. True, one political system is out of the running—isn't it?—What is left can only be good, for WE were on THIS side of the fight.

How ardently we fought, and how hotly we felt! How I despized my own sister who had Nazi leanings,—well, poor dear, now let her see! Is not your conviction about social systems a whole lot more important than simple human relationship—even though she was a tender and unselfish elder sister when she nursed me through that dreadful fever? But how could she maintain those cockeyed notions about racial superiority?

And poor Mother knew nothing but love,—amazing how an otherwise intelligent woman can be blinded by love—and held this one especially dear, because she needed it most, she said. No, sometimes it doesn't seem right that women should have the vote—the way they reason!

Was this war fought to make the world safe for democracy? No, not this time. It would have been nice if democracy might have been the world system, but now the Russians and we do not agree on our concepts of democracy, and so democracy is none too safe. If only we could convince the Russians that democracy is our special invention and as used by us is far superior to their—well—rather peculiar brand; but now they feel that their system is quite an improvement on our democracy, so there you are. Through small people's eyes it is bewildering. We can only look at one thing at a time with these eyese of ours, and we would much rather look at friends and relatives, trees and houses, sunshine and shadow, than at political systems. But we had better know what it is all about, or else we shall be deprived of friends and relatives, trees and houses, and perhaps put into a state where even sunshine and shadow are only seen by our mortal eyes. Even if we do keep an eye on other things than those which have a natural interest for a normal human being, we may not be prepared ENOUGH. Who knows how much ENOUGH is? Alas, it is not static, but an ever growing burden.

What is that first, terrible impact on what was once a rather sensitive small potato?

It is a propaganda picture, from the time when the Germans had been protecting Poland for some time, and the Russians moved in to protect that part of Poland which, so far, the Germans had not got around to protecting.

The Poles, the poor saps, unappreciative of the help they were getting from the neighbors, were none too enthusiastic. But they would get around in time, no doubt, when the glories of superior political systems replaced their families and their homes. Here was a picture of a Polish soldier who had fought the Germans, had lost all he loved, finally to fall into the kind hands of his brothers, the Russians. And here was a young Soldier, imbued with the ideals in which he was brought up, lecturing the Polish soldier on the mistaken notions that were rife in Poland, as against the blessings of justice from the East. Now, scarred by sorrow, the Pole may rise again, comforted by the fact that the right political system is sweeter than the love of mother and father, wife and child. The Russian, to judge by the expression of his face, spoke on with ardent happiness. The Pole, even in this propaganda picture, hadn't quite caught on yet He stood there, closing his mouth on the agony which the other had not felt—Russia had not been invaded yet in 1939—and knew that nothing he could say would be understood by so much enthusiasm. He was just a small potato, and fought for nothing more important than his home. He saw the world through small people's eyes still; and while they see truly, there is hope for us, no matter how wonderful the political systems which great people foist upon the world.

Love is the first thing we learn, and we must not outgrow it.

* * * * * *

In a personal letter Synnøve writes:

"Just now our cocker spaniel keeps begging me for his dinner—he got his dinner, an economically contrived, but not too palatable mixture of fish and cream sauce. I ate it myself. I told him that many dogs and even people in this world would lap it up joyously. But if he could speak, he would tell me he is very tired of the mixes I contrive, and would prefer steak, or perhaps roast chicken. Do I flatter myself that my cream sauces made with lard and skim milk are as good as the prewar butter-and-whole-milk product? Well, it isn't. As for those mixes with carrots, potatoes, and even spinach veiled over with three measly bits of stewmeat and one spoon of gravy, they may be good enough for a human being, but with a pedigreed dog it is different. Let us preach of vitamins, minerals, balanced diets and pocketbooks: still, if a dish pleases your appetite, it is good for you, if not—who knows, the fashionable dietitians preach as they may. How would you explain international strife with resultant scarcities of certain food-stuffs to a dog? Wouldn't he tell us that war is an expensive pastime? And how do you raise a four-footed brute to the level of sacrificial unselfishness? In everyday life, he has no theories. In an emergency, dogs like people are cowards or heroes. Our dog is a coward. A few years ago we had a large rooster here which went mad with pride after we disposed of his competitors. I couldn't weed the yard or carry in a bucket of water without being attacked by the brute. Then I called on the dog to help me keep the rooster busy while I got my work done, but the fool dog ran and hid from the rooster. Speaking of chickens—they HAVE self-sacrificial tendencies. This same rooster was most considerate of the hens, and very wise before he went mad. Also, the mother hens are moving in their kindness and wisdom for the chickens. I have seen so much individuality, or perhaps character, in the mother hens I have had here, that I think it is wicked to raise the chickens in incubators.

I just don't like these Spartan institutions for animal or man. The essential thing is our being fellows on this globe for the short time we are risen out of the dust. We

are taken out of the dust, temporarily, for the spirit to be made manifest through us,—and then we fool with all sorts of peculiar calculations, how to raise chickens by the hundreds instead of by the dozens, depriving them of their joy in living. Well, I should kick for animals—we don't even grant that much respect to fellow humans. My sister wrote: "I never could understand about politics. But I simply didn't like the way the Germans were killing the Jews, so I had to hide them."*—There was no idealism in it at all—my sister never was religious nor held any social theories, she just went ahead and had as good a time as she could contrive for everybody, full of dance and song and mischief, especially mischief. She is witty and a good mimic, has taken a lot of hardship, and made many enemies and many friends. Now I get this picture of her, looking terribly old, with eyes much larger than before having an expression which is sad and jolly at the same time, and her four born children and the adopted one around her with so much sad knowledge behind their friendly eyes. The things they have seen,—and I can't even kill a chicken because I know he thinks and feels."

*(Synnøves sister spent 2 years in a German concentration camp in Holland for harboring 17 Jewish refugees in her house:—"although," she righteously protests, "I had only eleven when I was caught!")

* * * * * *

Pattern on the Loom

DORA L. KOCH.

The words "creative living" have a melodious sound to any one who is aware of the longing within his own being, to become an integral part of life as a whole. Every normal person has a desire for self-expression and the failure to find an outlet for it sometimes creates an inferiority complex of a depressing nature. Creative work IS self-expression, and to be soul-satisfying it must be of some tangible value and must too, in some way satisfy the deep-rooted hunger for beauty inherent in everyone.

The various crafts and creative arts are so numerous that anyone should be able to find the one, or several, that are best suited to his individul need. To mention only a few: weaving, pottery making, wood, leather and metal crafts and modeling in clay. All these things could be developed in the individual homes, or done together in a community endeavor started perhaps in the school of an evening by a few congenial spirits and developed into a community project sponsored by the town or some leading organization.

Perhaps the craft-art of weaving is in some measure the art that comes closest, at this time, to being a national art, because even in its simplest forms i can produce things of beauty and intrinsic value. Ours is still a young nation but we have lived sufficiently long to have produced this art of weaving with its own characteristics, to have seen it develop—flourish, decline and rise again with what seems to be a permanent quality of oneness with our people. At least we hope that it never again becomes a LOST art.

No one knows definitely how old the art of weaving is, but it is interesting to note that the first known weaving was the braid, which developed into an art of its own and is still used, not only in the single braid in the making of colorful rag rugs, but also in wider six to eight inch intricate braids used in modern handmade rugs of geometric design.

Like our people, our weaving art comes of mixed ancestry, having evolved from much older forms coming to our shores with the Mennonites, the Irish, Dutch, Scotch and the Puritan English. At the time of the sailing of the Mayflower from The Island, weaving was a rural household activity. It was even called a by-product of agriculture" because the wool raised on the small farms was washed, carded, spun, dyed and woven into necessary cloth in the heart of the home. Every member of the family did his share of the work; even the head of the household taking his turn at the loom when his outdoor tasks were not clamoring at his heels. In the cities the specialized groups joined together in Weavers' Guilds making a particular kind of cloth. The age of these guilds is not known, but they are mentioned as far back as 1100. Pictures of looms and shuttles from that era show them to be very much the same as those of today.

The making of woolen cloth was England's first real industry and one man, Jack of Newbury, invented the fabric known as broadcloth. This was woven on looms that were so wide that they required a weaver to stand on either side to pass the shuttle back and forth. Other prominent weavers made quantities of excellent cloth. One of them, Thomas Blanket, is especially well remembered because he invented the warm downy things into which we snuggle on cold frosty nights. Silks and elaborately figured textiles were woven on the ancient draw-loom which was invented in China in early times, found its way to southern Europe early in the Christian era and to England some centuries later. We read that in 1573 tufted taffeties, velvets, tissue fabrics and other silk cloths were perfected; and they must certainly have been woven on the great draw-loom with its maze of thousands of threads, each one of which could be controlled seperately.

Though weaving was highly developed at the time of the departure of the Mayflower from England, the first American weavers were not skilled in the work as were the guild weavers. The Puritans came from the rural areas where the materials made were for the rough wear of rugged living and so consequently were the early materials woven in this country. In 1638 twenty families of clothmakers were brought to this country and settled at Rowly, Massachusetts, where the first textile factory on American soil was established. Later factories were established at Philadelphia and New York. A group of linen weavers came from Ireland and settled in New Hampshire; other groups settled in Rhode Island, but until after the Revolution the greater part of our textiles was produced on the household looms of the rural people. As in England every member of the family took part in the work. The younger children wound the bobbins for the shuttles, the older ones carded and spun, the mother wove and also spent many weary hours over her steaming dye pot. In the long winters when there was little farm work to be done, even the man of the house spent many hours at the loom. It was in the homes of these "domestic manufacturers" that our

American art of weaving developed its characteristics and its multitude and varieties of patterns.

These, the first American weavers, had many troublesome problems. Perhaps the most irritating of them was the shortage of raw materials. Cotton could not grow in New England. Some sheep were raised, but not enough for an adequate supply of wool. The embargo on wool from England made its importation impossible. This embargo policy by the mother-country certainly added greatly to the irritations which led to the War of Independence. Spinning was looked upon as an act of patriotism and women got together for all day spinning-sessions. Brides who wished to show their patriotism married in dresses made of hand-woven materials. Independence was marching forward in the hearts of the colonists.

At the time of the Revolution there were a number of textile factories in America, but they were not anything like our modern factories which are noisy places of mass production. They were merely lofts or houses filled with looms very much like our hand-looms and the ancient looms of the Middle Ages, each being operated by one weaver who opened the sheds, threw in the shuttle and banged the batten after each "shot" of the weft.

Since spinning was by far the most laborious part of the weaving process it was only natural that the first power machine to be invented in the industry should be a spinning machine. A hand-weaver can produce between one and eight yards of material in a day—the yardage depending on the skill of the weaver and the fineness of the cloth. No less than eight spinners were required to keep one weaver supplied with yarn or thread.

The inventor of the first spinning-machine reaped neither riches nor recognition for his effort. He was persecuted and driven from place to place by angry weavers who did not wish to be displaced by a machine. He finally turned his machine over to the inmates of a poorhouse and fled to France where he died in poverty. But the machine age was at hand and no one could prevent it from reaching out to the new world. The first practical spinner was patented in 1770, but it was a number of years before a model reached our country. Though several attempts were made to smuggle models cast in brass to America, they were frustrated by the vigilant English guards. Finally however a model was made of wood, cut into small pieces and smuggled piece by piece to France and thence to Philadelphia.

The Revolution marked the end of an epoch in American weaving, since it also marked the beginning of the use of machines in the textile factories. The advent of the automatic spinner caused complications and it was inevitable that automatic looms should soon take their place in the weaving business. The stocks of yarns were piling up, weavers were swamped with yarns and this was causing an unsettled effect on prices. In England a Dr. Cartwright set out to remedy that by inventing a power loom. He took out his final patent in 1787. So here was speed to match speed and though the power loom was ridiculed and called impractical it was here to stay and was soon to edge all the poetry out of the home industry and industry out of the home.

When the Jaquard loom was brought to Philadelphia, 1826, power weaving was still young, and though the housewives were now making many beautiful patterned things on their loom, they must have thought the products of the Jaquard looms more elegant. The hand-looms gradually disappeared from the homes. They were stored in old barns and attics where they gathered dust for years, until hand weaving once more began to grow—not into an industry but into the artistic consciousness of the people.

At the time of te Civil War a considerable amount of weaving still was being done on household looms. Between the Civil War and our time very little was done except for the weaving of rag rugs by the older ladies. Hardly any of the better sorts of weaving had survived. They had very nearly been killed by the mass production of the Jaquard loom. The few artistic souls who kept the art alive were scattered throughout the East and the South. To these individuals we are indebted for preserving our heritage of patterns and drafts of patterns, many of which had deteriorated greatly by wear and tear and had become incomplete.

In the South, due to the selfless work of charitable and educational organizations, patterns have been rebuilt so to speak, and have been taught to the mountain people, mainly as a way of helping them alleviate their extreme poverty through the sale of their woven product. The situation is reversed in the North. There weaving is done principally for its artistic value and the satisfaction of having produced something of lasting value, an expression of personal qualities. Beginning in the East and spreading to all parts of the country craft and art organizations have sprung up to foster and develop its possibilities. Weaving schools and institutes have been established in many places and weaving is being taught in some public schools, in summer camps and in settlement-houses. One of the most interesting ways in which the art of weaving is being used is in occupational theraphy in hospitals and institutions. Even tapestry, the most complicated and difficult of all forms of hand-weaving is used in mental hospitals because it absorbs the entire interest of the patient, which causes him to forget all disturbances of the mind. Persons suffering from inferiority complex have gained selfconfidence through mastery of such an art of self-expression, giving them again a dignity of the soul.

An art, to become a national art, must be an art of the people. Only a few became real MASTERS of such arts as painting, music, literature, but any one can learn to weave —and can go as far as personal talent permits. It seems that working with threads holds a certain fascination for many people and the American yarns with their gorgeous array of fast colors offer a grand opportunity to any one with an eye to color harmony to create the most delightful pieces: rugs, scarves, coverlets, drapes for the home, material for upholstering, bags, pillow-tops, table-covers, baby-blankets, even cloth for coats or suits—all woven by hand. It is because weaving can be learned and enjoyed by anyone that it has become loved by so many.

According to my sounding-board there is a general desire, perhaps latent in many of us—but nevertheless coming to the surface like the deeper veins working to the top to burst forth as a sparkling spring of clear water — to weave a pattern of life characteristic of OUR people. That pattern then must be the expression of America's soul—and we the warp on which it is woven. Let us make it a beautiful pattern! Personally I should like to be one thread on the warp that is beamed on the "loom of living" of our people.

"Salt on a Bird Tale"

HOLGER M. ANDERSEN, Viborg, South Dakota.

A man would be considered an idiot if he set out on a hunting trip armed with a salt-shaker. Figuratively, a salt shaker comes in very handy, and in our modern day should be standard equipment for all who are in the quest of truth. A grain of salt, they say, brings out the true flavor. Be that as it may the bird tale herein referred to has all its own.

A psychological genius(?), who understood fully the workings of the human being,—his reactions, inhibitions, hidden emotions, silent fears and camouflaged weaknesses, created a bird as a commercial product which defied supply and demand. Production was unable to keep up with the hundreds of anonymous "seekers" who swarmed to the counter at which it was sold depositing their "bread and shoe-string" money in exchange for one of these unique creatures.

The following description will certify that its great appeal was not esthetic. It wasn't much to look at; rather crudely fashioned from an oversized pine-cone, it was supported by long insubstantial, spindly legs. At the opposite exteremity was a bright yellow (wooden) head catering to an unproportionate, elephantine beak, viewed by a pair of pin-point eyes; all of which was separated from the remaining anatomy by an equally absurd crane-like neck. In short, it was actually ugly.

But ugliness and bestiality has its attraction; a strange jaw-dropping, magnetic power which draws irresistably, and having drawn, repulses. Repulsion is a reaction; yet powerless to resist the attraction. An uncanny struggle takes place between the two. At this point the genius is at his climax. The tension of the opposite emotions is released by a clever mental twist, and the victim discovers that the sinister element has been an illusion. On the finely engraved card attached to one leg appears the following words:

"WORRY-BIRD"

I fly backwards because
I like to see where I
have been, and don't give
a damn where I am going!

Appeal has taken the place of attraction. The object is now desirable. Openmouthed awe is transformed into gleeful desire. Damn clever, that bird. "How much is it?—I'll take one",—without knowing why.

* * * * * * *

The appeal is readly explained. No longer ugly, the fictional bird had become a symbol of the inscription.

From the most ancient records of the human race we learn that there has been an almost instinctive desire for symbolism. Primitive man, suspecting spiritual beings be hind natural phenomenon, selected inanimate or animate objects as the symbols of his gods. Polytehism had a God-symbol for every conceivable urge capable of gaining the allegiance of man.

We have come to regard with extreme distaste the symbols of the polytheistic explanation of good and evil, and justifiably so. There is only one God who merits our allegiance. But denying their existence as Gods does not eliminate their power as forces in human life. Recognition of a single God-head does not mean complete devotion to His way. It does by profession,—but the test of the pudding is in the eating. Under camouflage or in secrecy—other "gods" have their reign, and knees are bent in obeisance to them.

The "eye-appeal" of their symbols has its root in the "I-appeal" of the human ego.

The FOOLosophy, symbolized by the "Worry-Bird" in all its innocence is characteristically American. An American God. All eyes are focused on the past priding ourselves on what we have been and have done, with no concern for the future. (Apparently).

If that is the object of the happy hunters armed with the sharp claws of selfish interest, it is time that the idiots, armed with their saltshakers, bring out the unsavory truth: national selfishness and individual selfishness leads to war, and consequently to self-destruction; the one symbol of peace, and the only living force for peace worthy of human allegiance is still the Prince of Peace.

* * * * * *

To Be or Not to Be a Christian

MARIE E. HANSEN.

"To be or not to be, that is the question," was said long before I was born, and by a man who said a lot of other truths that will live forever.

When Christianity is brought to the heathens, they rejoice because they are brought from darkness into the light.

We who are born into Christianity don't feel that joy, naturally, as we were never in the dark. Maybe we don't rejoice enough though.

Well, what of it? Our parents don't expect us to rejoice all the time because they made it possible for us to enjoy life; but they like to show us their understanding and love, and guide us if they can; but they don't live our life forus.

Our heavenly Father does not either expect us to rejoice all the time because we belong to him, but in our source of love and help when we need it.

But on earth there is something called annulment by our parents when they want to lay down the law to us before we are of age. God also annuls many of the things we plan to do and changes our course which, I am sure, is often of benefit ti us. As a Christian, I don't believe we come of age before we go through the portals to greater understanding.

To be or not to be as a Christian is an individual understanding between God and each of us. A boy or girl far away from his home can love it as much as the one at home, and the parents love them as much. God also loves his child no matter where he is and no matter how he worships.

Thirty Years with an Idea

MRS. MARIETTA JOHNSON.

CHAPTER IV

LITTLE CHILDREN

It is comething to have an educational theory; it is something quite different to put it into practice. The town of Fairhope is an effort to make a "good theory work," so this is an eminently appropriate location for a school working out a good theory. The town of Fairhope is conducted on the theory that community values belong to the community and that values created by the individual belong to the individual. It is not so much interested to change the economic capitalistic system as it is to establish justice, removing the monopolistic feature. It believes that allowing individuals to acquire the values belonging to the community and then taxing the values created by the individual constitute two very grave fundamental injustices, which are the basis of many wrong economic conditions.

An old gentleman, after a lengthy discussion of our educational theory, used to exclaim, "It is a splendid theory, but it can't be done, I tell you, it can't be done!" The response to that is, "It is not a good theory if it will not work." We may fail in its application, but the theory must be practical or it is false!

The aim of the school is to study to know and meet the needs of the growing organism; that is, to conduct a school program which will preserve the sincerity and unself-consciousness of the emotional life, provide for the finest, keenest intellectual activity, and minister to the all-round development of the nervous system. Ministering to growth, meeting the needs of the organism, is the sole function of the educational process—hence the term "organism." The child is a reacting organism and the test of the environment is his reaction. A bad child may not come from a bad home. However good the home is, it is bad for him or he would be good! Parents and teachers often protest that they treat the children "all alike!" thinking that this is impartial. The only way to be truly impartial is to secure the right reaction! We must constantly bear in mind that we are dealing with a unit organism. As Henderson says, it is impossible to have good health in one part of the organism and ill health in another! It is either good or ill for the entire organism always!

No one knows exactly the needs of childhood, nor just how to supply these, but even though the ideal may not be realized at once it is still the high privilege and duty of the adult to try to know. THE way has not yet been found —the last word has not been spoken. Skeptics sometimes ask, "Will it fit my child?" There is no "it"—but an effort to furnish the best conditions for every child. What those needs are and how they are to be met may never be agreed upon, but we must continue to "reason together" and to study with an open mind. We do not present our program as final. The youngest teacher may find a better way. But we offer the following program as the best we know at this time.

We group the children according to chronological age; that is really the only age of which we may be certain. We think this prevents self-consciousness and we believe the first condition of growth is unself-consciousness. Grouping children according to attainment or achievement gives a wrong conception of education. It gives the child the idea that education consists in meeting the demands of the adult. This self-consciousness may arrest development. Children should grow mentally as they do physically—without effort or strain. Grading makes the child think that an educated person is one who knows a great deal, or has unusual skill, or one who has met the requirements of the system and perhaps has received honors. Isn't it strange that we should feel it right and proper to reward people for LEARNING? Some of the leaders in the most progressive schools still contend that an external standard is necessary. Even in religion we constantly hear of a "crown" as the reward of faith or a good life, never realizing that the thought of the REWARD weakens the faith and disfigures the good life!

Learning is merely satisfying mental hunger. If society ever has rewards to offer they should be in recognition of a real contribution in actual service! And this is unnecessary, however, for whole-hearted, disinterested service is always its own reward! Therefore, it seems perfectly logical to eliminate the "reward" idea entirely. We shall never know how much real happiness and joy—yes, power—in the present has been lost by this subtle fear of the future! This preparation idea! Adults may fail to minister to growth but a child CAN NOT fail. Even the idea of "measuring progress" may develop self-consciousness and be inhibiting— and furthermore we all know that the ESSENTIAL in all progress is immeasurable!

The child should never feel that he must "keep up" with others mentally any more than he should be stimulated to "keep up" in height or weight. When young children are grouped with older children they often feel superior to those of their own age and the child who is grouped with children much younger may acquire and inferiority complex. Still, it is always better for a child to be a little older than a little younger than his group. In the former case he is more relaxed and gains poise and confidence. In the latter he often suffers strain, which is especially undesirable for the growing child. The child who is fully the age of his group or a trifle older gets more out of his experience—is staying young—while the child grouped with older children is unable to benefit as fully from the experience and is GROWING old!

When the adolescent period is reached there is danger of forcing of the sex and social consciousness. As society becomes more complex the period of childhood should be prolonged to preserve the power to adjust. The prolonging of chilhood is the hope of the race—the longer the time from birth to maturity the higher the organism. This is true individually as well as biologically. No parent should be proud of a precocious child. Intellectual "brilliance" in the very young may not be the promise of the finest maturity. Henderson says, "Children should be ignorant." This must be a great comfort to parents and teachers!

Children should not strive to get into a higher GRADE. Why should we subject the mental power of the child to measurements and external stimulation more than the physical or spiritual powers? If the body were subjected to the same conscious striving to meet external ends, as those for which the mind is stimulated, all real physical vigor would be destroyed and such a process for the spirit would develop the most objectionable hypocrisy. When one sees children trying to "show off" their knowledge or skill, or insisting that certain children do not belong in their class, the elders are to be blamed, not the children. Sometimes children and even parents have complained because others who do not know as much or who have not done as fine work are promoted with them! We are hoping to forget the word "promoted." Education is the process of meeting the needs of children.

The teacher endeavors to provide activities and exercises which are adapted to the stage of development of the group, giving special attention to any individual child. This individual attention should never be of the kind that stimulates a child to "catch up" or "keep up" with the class, nor to "get ahead" or "keep aehad" of anyone—but merely to see that he clearly understands what he is doing Not so much what one does, as the effect of the work on the pupil.

A college professor tells the story of a student coming to him one day and saying, "I know I am not doing very much in this class and I know that you know I am not a good student; but I want you to know I am GETTING MORE out of this work than I ever did before."

All zest in learning depends upon mental grasp. If the work secures the best mental activity, it is educational. The observing eye of the teacher is necessary to discover when children are using their mental endowment to highest advantage. This is evidenced by eager and sustained interest and resulting satisfactions. It requires no test or examination to discover when children do their best at play. Neither should it be difficult to know when they are doing their best in school work.

The kindergarten is for children from four to six years of age. The session is only two hours. The room is large and airy, furnished in the simplest way. There is no fixed program, although the teacher keeps in mind that the children need to have experience in musical expression, daily singing and dancing, and musical games, and ample time for free play. A playground is provided with a wading pool, trees to climb, swings and slides and plenty of space for games. Children need time for quiet and rest—the story hour. Stories should not be told for "language" nor for "morals," but for the joy of the narrative. The story should be full of action and adapted to the age of the children. No special "method" is necessary; each teacher develops her own method. All "method" is determined by two factors: the aim and the nature of the material. The aim in education is to provide conditions for children to live wholesomely of body, using their minds to the best advantage and preserving the sincerity and unself-consciousness of the emotional life. This requires a constant study of the nature and needs of growth.

Much time is given to creative hand-work, using clay, sand, blocks, paints, and tools. The children have free access to all material and the work is self-prompted and self-directed. The presence of the material is suggestive. Kindergarten children often live in an imaginary world which is real to them. The fullest opportunity should be given for this dramatization of life as long as it is in the right direction.

When the child says "good-bye" to mother his mind runs forward to the activities of the school. If he finds the teacher and other children engrossed in creative activity he becomes interested at once to use material. The children in our kindergarten and primary school are often so busily employed before the opening hour that they do not know whether school has "begun" or not! This gives them the conception of school as a place to do things and the teacher becomes a real friend who helps them to accomplish their own purposes.

Time is given for dramatization and also for using some other language than their own, if the school can afford a teacher and if the children respond. Language should be used and incidentally learned. The speech centers are developed early, so that it is possible for a child to speak two or perhaps three languages wholesomely, whereas he should not learn to read or write his own! If the teacher of French could remain in the school room for an hour, joining the children in their work and play, using French words occasionally, the children would become keen to "say something" in French also. Gradually and without any thought of a "French lesson" they would use that language in the presence of the teacher. In this way a second language becomes a "means of communication," like the native tongue, and is never a task. I am always sorry for the children and for the French teacher when all work must stop to get ready for French! Too much time is spent in studying about a language, its form, construction, etc., when children are keen to use it.

There are aimless walks in which the teacher stops to discuss any object of interest. And also there are aimful walks for particular observation. Children NEED to have happy experiences with nature, not so much to learn facts as to acquire an attitude. "I saw a robin this morning," exclaims a child. "I found a white robin," cries another. "Oh, Miss F, let us go to see Mr. M's garden; ever so many things are growing and this is February." Children should not be held to close observation; no effort is made to teach, but it is very important that they play in the water and sand, have a garden or pets, throw stones, climb trees, and generally enjoy the out-of-doors. Even children of kindergarten age are interested in seeing what the rain did to the road—what animals and plants are doing and often why. While older children delight in tracing miniature river systems and learning about other forms of land and water. The great difficulty in all nature study is that teachers know so little and care so little for the common things. Even those who have majored in science in college are often at a loss when walking with children. Unless they can have a text in their hands they often seem unable to recognize plants and animals.

The knowledge gained in this way develops a confidence in nature. Children should not be afraid of snakes, nor toads, nor any creature—neither should they fear wind or lightning or rain. "Let me put the snake around my neck!" "Let me carry this big fellow in my blouse!" Of course, the teacher must allow the children to handle only harmless snakes!