

NATURE

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CONTENTS

	Page
Universities in War-time	97
The Anatomy of Freedom. By Prof. A. D. Ritchie	100
The Laboratory Mouse. By Dr. Hans Grüneberg	101
New Cytological Technique. By Dr. Irene Manton	102
Precolombian Haiti. By G. H. S. Bushnell	103
The Values of Science to Humanity. By Prof. A. G. Tansley, F.R.S.	104
Portable Mass Spectrometer. By John A. Hipple, jun.	111
Care of Works of Art in War-time. By F. Ian G. Rawlins	112
Obituaries :	
Sir Daniel Hall, K.C.B., F.R.S. By Sir John Russell, F.R.S.	114
Prof. D. la Cour. By Prof. S. Chapman, F.R.S.	115
News and Views	116
Letters to the Editors:	
Number of Primes and Probability Considerations.—Prof. W. H. Furry; The Right Hon. Lord Cherwell, F.R.S.	120
Relationships of some Primitive Tetrapods.—Dr. T. S. Westoll	121
Narcotic for Marine Invertebrates.—Isabel C. Ledingham and G. P. Wells	121
Enamel Organ of the Rat's Incisor Tooth in Vitamin E Deficiency.—Prof. J. T. Irving	122
Selective Excitation of Spectra by the High-Frequency Discharge.—Prof. R. K. Asundi and Nand Lal Singh	123
The Problem of the Autonomy of Life.—Prof. Reginald O. Kapp; Prof. F. G. Donnan, C.B.E., F.R.S.	123
General and Social Biology—Sir James Barret, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G.	124
Higher Algebra.—F. G. W. Brown	124
Pyrethrum Sprays.—Dr. E. A. Parkin	124
Mineral and Vitamin Requirements and the War-time Dietary. By Prof. R. A. Peters, F.R.S.	125
Amino Acid Analysis and the Structure of Proteins. By Prof. A. C. Chibnall, F.R.S.	127
Timber-seasoning Kilns	127

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UNIVERSITIES IN WAR-TIME

THE extent to which the universities of Great Britain are addressing themselves to the war effort is well indicated in an admirable series of articles which has appeared in *Britain To-day*, and also by a survey of the "University of London in War-Time, September 1939–March 1942", recently circulated in the Convocation of the University. Their part in reconstruction is no less vital. Both aspects of university war-time activity are reflected in two articles, which have appeared in a recent issue of *Science* (95, 369–72, 372–73; 1942), by Dr. Arthur Cutts Willard and Prof. A. J. Carlson respectively. Dr. Willard's address, "The University and the War", given at the Washington award dinner of the Western Society of Engineers, describes the ways in which the courses of the University of Illinois have been modified to meet professional demands for various services and its contribution to the war programme of the United States through the research activities of its scientific staff. The mere list of activities cited by Dr. Willard indicates that the University of Illinois is addressing itself to the immediate practical tasks of education, training and research, with vision and understanding. The contribution to morale of the Extension of Service in Agriculture and Home Economics, the trained specialists of which present to the people the results of scientific research carried out by the Agricultural Experiment Station, often in co-operation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is noteworthy, and the Engineering Science and Management Defense Training Programme is most impressive. Adult education, education in the armed forces and the encouragement of reading on the understanding of America, its aims, the War and the peace to follow are all represented.

Whereas the material contribution of the universities, of which London and Illinois are only examples, is important, the moral and spiritual contributions are even more important, and it is to this particularly that Prof. A. J. Carlson, of the University of Chicago, directs attention in his paper "The University and the Present Crisis". Emphasizing the particular dangers inherent to a university in time of war—which are involved in the very antithesis of education and war—he warns us of the importance of a re-examination of the relation of education and democracy before we attempt to modify educational institutions or systems in a period of hysteria and fear. There should be no relaxation in our standards of education, university or other. A period of war is not the best time for inaugurating basic educational reconstruction, though it is well to give timely consideration to the subject; and a democracy should be specially on its guard against the dangers to education and to fundamental research which are always present in a war effort of the magnitude of that at present required.

From these comparatively negative obligations, Prof. Carlson turns to the positive obligations of the university at the present time. Among these he places foremost a tightening of the intellectual belt,

a greater attention to duty for teachers and students. Waste of time must be rigorously eliminated, and both teachers and taught must recognize their responsibility for seeing that the golden hours are used to the full. The practical duties of placing university facilities at the disposal of the Government for training men in the special services of the armed forces, and for aiding in the solution of scientific and other problems forced on us by the War are put first, the training of the full quota required each year of medical men, physicists, chemists and engineers comes next, while finally Prof. Carlson stresses the importance of free minds, informed by principles derived from human experience through the ages, and open, no matter what waves of change beat upon them.

The duty and responsibility for aiding in the development and maturing of such creative and open minds lie mainly on the university, both in peace or in war. The universities are among the ultimate safeguards of freedom of thought, and to them we must look for the constructive criticism and imaginative insight essential in the elaboration of any sure plans for reconstruction when victory is won. The intellectual activities of the university, as President Futchins writes, are the symbol of everything we have to defend, and the best service the university can render in the defence of the United Nations is to see to it that these activities are maintained in full force and vigour. Only the universities can carry the incredibly heavy burden of formulating, clarifying and vitalizing the ideas which should animate mankind; they must carry that burden, even in total war, if civilization is to be saved.

It is encouraging that the exceptional stimulus that the present struggle is undoubtedly giving to scientific thought is not leading the universities to overlook the great resurgence of social, economic, political, industrial and educational leadership which is required nationally and regionally. Possibly our Russian allies are prone to over-emphasize the material side of the university's contribution, as an article by Dr. P. Kapitza "Science and War" in *Science* (95, 396; 1942) suggests; but Dr. Kapitza also points out that the strain and tension due to war are exposing the weak spots in our economy, technique and organization, showing the points where the State must first be assisted, and clearly formulating the demands which society makes on science. In his speech in the House of Commons on June 16 on the estimates for his Department, Mr. Butler, president of the Board of Education, referred to the contribution to the war effort in the steady flow of qualified recruits for the specialized services, but it was clear that the importance of something more than academic qualifications for leadership was in his mind.

This was shown, for example, in the appointment of a committee, with Dr. McNair, vice-chancellor of the University of Liverpool as chairman, to investigate the recruitment of teachers from other academic services, as well as the question of the supply of teachers and of youth leaders. This and other steps already taken, such as the short courses for teachers

in the history and current affairs of the United States and of the U.S.S.R., initiated in close co-operation with the American and Russian Ambassadors, and the establishment of a body under the chairmanship of Lord Fleming to work out a plan under which the facilities of a boarding-school education may be extended to those who desire to profit by them, irrespective of their means, while but indirectly connected with the universities, will facilitate the fulfilment of their task of supplying the nation with the trained leaders it requires.

The quality of the leaders which a university provides does not indeed depend solely upon the university itself. It depends partly at least upon the quality of the students entering on its courses, and therefore to some extent on educational systems of the schools. It is well to find, therefore, a new outlook on education reflected in the House of Commons debate, and such promising plans outlined in Mr. Butler's speech, though it should be remembered that much of the information required as a basis for decision has already been set before the Government by the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education with the aid of school inspectors. What is, in fact, required of the Government here is a definite plan for education, from the primary school to the university, upon which ultimate decision and action can be taken.

The real problem in a democratic society, in education as elsewhere, is to secure the full use of the nation's talents. The McNair Committee may be expected to advance proposals regarding the supply of teachers which will redress the lack of missionary zeal and first-rate competence; but this is only one direction in which the task is to open the door to men and women who can best serve by their boldness and ability, to give them opportunity in their public work and in their private lives to execute plans of action and to take responsibility. In the Civil Service adventurous spirits are lacking; in industry, vision and courage; in politics, honest, able men are scarce; and pride, enthusiasm and capacity are too often absent from the humblest to the highest spheres of work.

It is the function of the nation's schools and universities to provide the channels along which these men and women will pass. To make the schools themselves open to all equally, and at once uniformly well endowed in equipment and personnel and widely diverse in their freedom to develop, are essential steps to this end. Also it is essential that, simultaneously through the universities and by adult education, the nation should be brought to a new appreciation of the moral values upon which democracy is built and without which we look in vain for real leadership of youth or of any age.

If the schools and universities are to supply this creative leadership which is our first need, both alike must concern themselves with the preservation of moral standards and spiritual values. Too long have we allowed, as Lord Elton points out in his stimulating book "Saint George or the Dragon", the military virtues of loyalty, courage, endurance and discipline, upon which our very existence now

depends, to be despised, ignoring the fact that they are the very basis of civilization itself; and punctuality, regularity and industry to be sneered at as slave values. Yet without these last even creative genius will never see the fruition of its gifts to man; and the first, though not the only Christian virtues, lie so close to the core of Christianity that we can scarcely wonder that twenty years campaign against them has led to a weakening in the hold of Christianity itself. Indeed, they can be reduced, as Lord Elton notes, to a single quality, unselfishness, and if there is one defect more than any other responsible for our unpreparedness for the present War, for the defects of the present social order, for the softness and love of ease and pleasure which may have led our foes to misjudge us but also earned their just scorn, it is the directly opposed vice of selfishness.

We may well be grateful to Lord Elton for his penetrating exposure of the shallow and misguided intellectualism which for twenty years has been so rampant against the virtues we need alike to win the War and to build the peace. Unless that lesson is learnt aright, there will indeed be no place to build. Civilization is self-discipline, and its advance is measured by man's gradual mastery of his more savage instincts. That much at least Nazism has revealed to us, and having once overthrown that menace it would be folly indeed to throw aside the moral values which have brought us to victory without making sure that we have found new and enduring values adequate to the spiritual as well as material tasks which lie ahead.

The extent to which the moral and intellectual foundations of civilization have been shaken is nowhere better revealed than in our lost capacity for moral indignation. The evil could, however, scarcely have gone so far had there not been a widespread indifference to the basic importance of character. From this the War has happily aroused us, and it has already been demonstrated that the nation possesses formidable reserves of courage, loyalty, fortitude and endurance, and that there is little lack of those willing to accept responsibility. It must, however, be the first concern of any kind of educational system to see that the emphasis on the training of character is never again omitted, from the university downwards. There must be no further betrayal, and the extent to which the conception of service is replacing that of private profit in the realm of industry and commerce must be reflected throughout that of education. That idea lies at the heart of the youth movement, but unless it is fortified continually by the teaching and example of the schools, the movement will never fulfil its promise.

In his stimulating chapter "Not Examinees, but Men", Lord Elton is writing primarily with the schools in mind, but what he says of them with regard to training in citizenship and the more effective choice of leaders is equally true of the university. The system of examination in book learning alone can no longer be retained. Means must be found of testing other qualifications for leadership besides the capacity to absorb and reproduce knowledge. Courage, common sense, originality of mind and sound physique

—these also must be taken into account; and we should make sure that the educational ladder of the future is one to be climbed by boys who show signs of initiative and character as well as intelligence.

In the gearing of intelligence to character and experience, the retention of national service after the War may well play an important part. Conscriptio, whether in the fighting services or in the factories or on the land, might do much to toughen the physique, socialize the instincts and enrich the later learning in school or university. Moreover, by emphasizing the idea of obligations and services to the State from every citizen as the condition upon which its protection and privileges are enjoyed, it might do much to fortify the youth of the nation against the softness and heresies which the propaganda attacked by Lord Elton broadcast so disastrously between the wars.

The universities have a part to play here through the recognition of social studies. By a fuller and deeper appreciation of the importance of man as a vital entity in the structure of a dynamic civilization, they can lay the foundation for, or round off, as the case may be, the experience which a short period of national service can give.

No excellence in the material contribution of the universities in peace or in war can atone for any shortcomings in moral or spiritual leadership. It is not enough to recognize the shallowness and ineffectiveness of much of the intellectualism and scepticism of the last twenty-five years. Without idealism, without conviction, without a sense of the positive values of life, and a vision of those enduring spiritual verities of mankind, now imperilled, but by which alone man has made his slow advance out of the darkness and chaos of barbarism, there can be neither the moral passion which will overthrow the aggressor nor the balanced view of life which will enable a nobler and wiser civilization to emerge from the present turmoil. Man needs the inspiration of a living faith and an adequate working philosophy if he is to bring to the tasks that now confront us the serenity and the conviction that will bring them to success, and overthrow the forces making for social disintegration, whether in society, in industry or in international affairs.

The late Prof. J. L. Stocks said truly in his essay on the need for a social philosophy that our generation is not being given the tools necessary for a sound critical judgment in social affairs. Philosophy, he says, alone has the power to give them those tools. When men do not know the faith by which they live, they will be apt inadvertently to betray it. The universities are no longer academies of religion, though for centuries it was one of their main tasks to train the leaders of the Church. To them men may fairly look, not for the light of truth alone but also for the compelling force of moral conviction, for the enthusiasm which has a place in all genius and all creative work, and for the vision and wisdom by which men may steady their course and walk surely in this anxious, crumbling world.

The universities fail of their full purpose unless

they give to their alumni in some measure the power to see life steadily and to see it whole, and the capacity to re-discover and re-create for each fresh generation truth in all its many facets which, as Dr. R. R. Marett reminds us, can never afford to stand still. With courage, loyalty, discipline and endurance, a civilization may be strong to defend itself, but without also culture and religion it is unworthy and indeed unable to survive.

Here then is the point at which the universities must face anew the interpretation of religious experience and of the spiritual heritage of mankind. Their responsibility to-day for imparting to all their students and scholars some sense of the scientific outlook and spirit, with its untiring passion for truth, the ceaseless testing and sifting of the accumulated knowledge of mankind as part of the discipline which equips men and women alike for life and leadership in this modern world, is admitted. There must now be recognized also their responsibility for instilling as a counterpart to legitimate scientific scepticism a respect for the accumulated wisdom of mankind, and a training in cultural and ethical values which will lead to the formation of sound judgment.

To leave the young, in the sphere of wisdom, to re-discover painfully for themselves the moral and spiritual truths which the accumulated experience of past generations has accepted as making for the good life in the individual and in the State is neither science nor sense. In the sphere of knowledge, the scientific worker does not hesitate in practice to accept the conclusions of the past, or to stand upon the shoulders of his predecessors. Both in knowledge and in the realm of wisdom, to reject all the observations and experience of the past and to insist on verifying afresh every single fact or technique leads at once to chaos and deadlock, not to progress.

It is this task of cherishing the rich moral and spiritual heritage of mankind and stimulating the creative thought which will lead to the discovery and formulation afresh of a faith and a philosophy adequate to meet the challenge of to-day that is the supreme responsibility of the universities. They, as none other, can build up the aristocracy of ability and integrity which Zinsser insisted is essential to maintain a democracy and protect it from deterioration and eventual chaos. If science and religion are to found a fellowship which will lead men forward, facing change in the spirit of science, trending upward in the way which religion alone in the elements of human experience, as Whitehead points out, has consistently done, the universities will assuredly prove a decisive factor. Only as they play their full part can those bright hopes of the youth movement or the vision of service, of sacrifice and adventure dawning anew on the minds of men and women in so many scattered walks of life, find their fulfilment in action and in a fellowship strong and serene enough never to be turned again by selfishness or love of ease from the task of building a nobler world order and adding, in response to the call of prophetic statesmanship, their own contribution to their heritage of culture, learning and religious experience.

THE ANATOMY OF FREEDOM

Freedom: its Meaning

By Benedetto Croce, Charles A. Beard, Jacques Maritain, Bertrand Russell, Gaetano Salvemini, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Henry A. Wallace, Henri Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead, Thomas Mann, Felix Bernstein, Harold J. Laski, John Macmurray, Albert Einstein, J. B. S. Haldane, Lancelot Hogben, Frank Kingdon, Franz Boas, John Dewey. Planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. Pp. vii+335. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1942.) 16s. net.

A VARIED assortment of essays make up this book. Though it is certainly useful to have these different points of view and different subjects brought together for comparison, the method has disadvantages. The essays are arranged in alphabetical order of the authors' names, an arrangement more convenient for the editor than the reader. Three of the essays (those by Bergson and Profs. J. Dewey and A. N. Whitehead) are chapters taken from published books, and it is possible that their original context suited them better. There is a serious gap in the ground covered: namely, no more than incidental references to the legal aspect of freedom. Prof. H. J. Laski could have done this very well, but he has preferred to discuss the problem of nationalism as an obstacle to freedom. If only each writer, before finally committing himself, could have read a preliminary draft of the other contributions, it would have been an improvement. For example, it would have saved Dr. V. Stefansson 'flogging a dead horse' if he had read the explanation by his fellow anthropologist, Prof. Boas, that primitive man lacks the concept of freedom. Unfortunately, this last suggestion is a counsel of perfection. Only a superhuman editor could cope with such conditions.

Despite these defects, the editor's claim to have reached a synthesis is more nearly realized than one would have thought possible before reading the book. Present-day facts speak too clearly to be ignored. We can all see, to quote Benedetto Croce, "the barrenness in terms of thought, science, art, civic virtues, human relations, that systems based on violence—or on what amounts to the same thing, on authority—commonly show. Everything sound and productive that still survives, or flourishes in them in the directions mentioned, survives and flourishes either through the survival of free minds or through the persistence of acquired habits. But these latter gradually weaken for lack of sustenance and replenishment and through the passing of the human beings who possess them. Meanwhile none of the new formulas or ideals is allowed to defend itself in orderly discussion, to justify itself by critically tested arguments, by interpretations of history, in a word by perspicacious, cautious, sober research. It is forced to drone its arid mechanical assertions over and over again, without variations, without proofs, without elaborations, deriving such animation as it can from an accompaniment of threats" (p. 57). The intellectual equipment we need as defenders of freedom is to understand the nature of social and political freedom, the historical circumstances that have favoured its development, how much we have of it now, and what is necessary for its preservation and extension. These are the topics discussed in this book.

There is a widespread and dangerous belief that the obstacles to freedom are incidental difficulties