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Humanism, Yesterday and Today

By Francis Neilson

The Collecting of Books

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the British and the American rationalists were expounding their doctrines in political and philosophical arenas, there arose many questions as to what they meant when they used the term "humanism" as it applied to everyday affairs, and what significance it had when the same people linked it up with their notions of the Italian Renaissance. There has recently been so much debate as to what these terms stand for that the young student is somewhat confused when he finds that the humanism, that is, the craze for classical books, which arose at the beginning of the fourteenth century, had a totally different meaning from that which is given to it today. Perhaps the fact that, since the days of Auguste Comte, the term humanism has entered so much into sociological studies explains one of the reasons for this misunderstanding. There is no similarity at all between the humanism of today and that of the period when Petrarch and Boccaccio began to collect books.

It has been said that the Italian poet was the first humanist. Dr. Tilley, who wrote the remarkable essay in *The Cambridge Medieval History* on "The Early Renaissance," tells us that Petrarch "was the first to find in ancient literature a larger measure than elsewhere of that learning and training in virtue which are peculiar to men" (v. VII, p. 754).

Why he should be named the first humanist because of this discovery it is hard to tell, for nearly a thousand years before his time the Ptolemies, Soter and Philadelphus, had formed the two libraries and museum of Alexandria. Later, in the sixth century, Cassiodorus at Squillace brought together a great collection of works which has been considered by scholars to be the largest of that day. There were other collectors of books and, no doubt, at the centers of learning in Ireland there must have been libraries of high worth within reach of such an intellectual giant as Erigena. So perhaps there was something more than the study of ancient literature to qualify Petrarch for the honor of being the first humanist. Dr. Tilley tells us: "He found in the pages of Virgil and Horace, of Cicero and Seneca, especially in those of Cicero, a concentration of human aims and aspirations and a guide to human endeavour" (v. VII, p. 754).

However, before Petrarch came upon the scene, there was Albertino Mussato of Padua who, so Dr. Tilley points out, has been called "the initia-

tor of humanism" (v. VII, p. 755). But the type of humanism that he initiated is not explained.

The passion for gathering ancient works was not new. And as for "human aims" and "guides to human endeavour," the works of Plato reveal in a striking manner that they were the concern of the Greeks centuries before Philo set to work in Alexandria. Who can read "The Republic," "Protagoras" and "The Laws" of Plato and not be impressed with the inquiry shown in these dialogues about human aims and aspirations? These studies devoted to the affairs of man and the State have become as necessary for the reflections of philosophers as "De Legibus" of Cicero. Petrarch and Boccaccio, however, were not in possession of the Greek originals or Greek literature in general until long after the period of Erigena—an interval of six centuries. The fact that others must have been engaged upon the work to which the Italians so passionately gave their time is revealed by Roger Bacon who complained that it was difficult to procure the works of Aristotle.

There is an interesting essay awaiting an author who will pursue the study of "human aims and aspirations as a guide to human endeavour," as this seems to have been the principal intellectual object of the humanists of the Italian Renaissance. Such an excursion would lead him far from Europe. Perhaps to China, where he would find in Confucius and Mencius the same desires—to foster the aims and aspirations of man—which animated the Italians at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Both these Chinese philosophers devoted themselves to the task of reformation in man and in the State. Mencius tells us:

> The world had fallen into decay, and right principles had disappeared. Perverse discourses and oppressive deeds were waxen rife. Ministers murdered their rulers and sons their fathers.

It would not be necessary to change a word in this statement to make it apply to the conditions of Europe during the fourteenth century.

The Right to Human Happiness

ANOTHER QUITE DIFFERENT NOTION of humanism is dealt with by Dr. Gerald Walsh, Professor of Medieval Culture at Fordham University. This interesting survey of those whom he classifies as humanists is called "Medieval Humanism," but his conception of it is far different from that of "the cult of antiquity." Dr. Walsh says: "The root idea of humanism is that everyone has the right, if not the duty, to seek human happiness in a human way."

But what is that right? To this question the modern Church has no reply, although many of the Early Fathers pronounced one in unmistakable terms. They knew "the footstool of God" was the source from which all men draw their sustenance, and every child of the Creator has a right to use it for its needs. St. Chrysostom declared:

> God gave the same earth to be cultivated by all. Since, therefore, His bounty is common, how comes it that you have so many fields and your neighbor not even a clod of earth?

And St. Ambrose proclaimed:

> The soil was given to the rich and poor in common. The pagans hold earth as property. They do blaspheme God.

These saints of the Church were humanists of the first order, for they understood the economic essential of human happiness.

Charlemagne and Alfred the Great

The Italian Renaissance was not the only one that arose in Europe. In many respects the movements that blossomed under Charlemagne in the eighth century and Alfred in the ninth were of a far more practical character than those of the fourteenth century, for the early scholars not only collected books as we know from the records left by Bede and Biscop; they fostered the growth of schools and the study of ancient manuscripts. The instruction issued by Charlemagne to the monks and secular canons urged them "not only to get together children of slaves but also the sons of free men, and take them into their societies." They were to be taught psalms, music, arithmetic and grammar and, besides, the writing of good editions of books. Alcuin, who went to the court of Charlemagne, tells us: "The boys not only read Virgil, but they were encouraged to write Latin verses themselves."

The most interesting story in the early history of Christian humanism concerns the life and work of three great ecclesiastics: Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin. They followed one another in a period of one hundred and fifty years, from 635 to 804. The abbeys where these men passed their days were famous for their wonderful libraries. We have accounts of how the works were collected. The catalogue of the library at York is preserved. In it we find the Early Fathers represented by fourteen volumes; ten Greek and Roman authors; six ancient grammarians; and six Latin poets. When Alcuin went to the Palace School of Charlemagne, he desired copies of the books he had left at York, and he made the following request:

> If it shall please your wisdom, I will send some of our boys, who may copy from thence whatever is necessary, and carry back into France the flowers of Britain; that the garden may not be shut up in York, but the fruits of it may be placed in the Paradise of Tours.

Professor Christian Pfister of the Sorbonne, a profound student of this period says:

> These letters [Alcuin's], of which 311 are extant, are filled chiefly with pious meditations, but they further form a mine of information as to the literary and social conditions of the time, and are the most reliable authority for the history of humanism in the Carolingian age. . . . (*Enc. Brit.*, v. I, p. 529).

The work that Alfred did for education was prodigious. Professor Pfister writes:

> . . . The Anglo-Saxons and the Italians brought to the Franks the treasures they had safely guarded; the Emperor Charles the Great recognised that it belonged to the duties of his office to spread enlightenment, to foster art and literature; and at length, after this night of darkness, there shone forth the brilliance of a true renaissance (*Camb. Med. Hist.*, v. II, p. 158).

Humanism in the Fourteenth Century

WHAT THAT SOMETHING other than collecting books must have been, to earn for them the title of humanist, is not related in any work by a scholar of the period. Indeed, it may be said that the fourteenth-century passion for classical authors was so great that they overlooked the fact that man—his aims and aspirations—was worthy of their practical attention. The so-called humanist movement, strangely enough, affected only the well-to-do who could afford to indulge the desire to discover and study ancient works of literature and art.

So far as this influenced the schools, religious and moral training was indispensable, and we are told that Lactantius was one of the favorites of the humanists and that they read Augustine, Jerome, and Cyprian. Pope Nicholas V was a humanist, and he employed scholars to translate the Greek prose writers. The works of the men of literature in the movement, such as the satires of Filelfo and Beccadelli's "Hermaphroditus" were somewhat salacious, if not obscene.

Notwithstanding the charge that has been made against the humanists of that period as opponents of the Christian religion, Dr. Tilley points out: "To the very close of the fifteenth century the Church and humanism were in close alliance."

However, it was the painters and sculptors who were the real humanists, for in their representations, they pictured man as they saw him. Their models were very often their personal friends, and anyone who has made a study of the masterpieces of that period cannot doubt that they were familiar with the virtues and the frailties of the persons they bequeathed to posterity on canvas and in marble.

It is curious that the writers who have given us so much information on the Italian Renaissance seem to have overlooked the importance of Richard de Bury. He had reached manhood before Petrarch and Boccaccio were born. Edward III made him Bishop of Durham, Treasurer of the Kingdom, and Lord Chancellor. He wrote a unique book called "Philobiblon," and in it we find dissertations upon volumes of the classics, which no other work of the period contains. We may infer from this that England at that time possessed a library of ancient works superior to any known to the humanists in Italy. Henry Morley tells us:

> . . . He [Richard de Bury] loved books, and gathered them from all quarters into a Library which he valued, not as a collection of rarities to be wondered at, but as a company of friends and teachers to be used. Any real student who desired to consult books might knock at the door of his palace at Bishop's Auckland, and be lodged and boarded while he stayed to make his references.

Certainly such a man should be included in the list of those humanists who were lovers of books.

Humanism has been defined as the cult of antiquity, and those who have studied the revival of learning which burst upon Europe at the beginning of the fourteenth century reveal plainly enough in their essays that only the few who were in a position to collect ancient works enjoyed the pursuit. Certainly men in general lived and worked in quite another sphere and were mainly occupied with the sordid concerns of making a living. The great collectors had little knowledge of the real life of the people and cared less about their human aims and aspirations.

It may be held, as Dr. Tilley suggests, that the movement was in the direction of an "emancipation from the tutelage of the Church in the cities of northern Italy" (*Camb. Med. Hist*, v. VII, p. 774). However, that may be no more than a coincidence for before Petrarch and Boccaccio were born there were many instances of a revolt among the people against the exactions of the monasteries and the nobles. Be that as it may, the passion for classical literature and culture took hold and spread rapidly as an avocation among rulers, their writers and artists. Moreover, the people engaged in this estimable work convinced themselves that they believed in

"the goodness of human life and in the dignity, even in the perfectability, of man."

But when we look into the economic and political history of Italy, France, and England, we often find conditions during the fourteenth century that do not reveal all that has been granted to the humanists. The right of criticism and free inquiry, which was claimed by those who indulged in the cult of antiquity, was not extended to the producers of wealth. It was an individualism for the few. Moreover, the powerful ones were frequently at war and made things very uncomfortable for those who did not dare to exercise the right of criticism. Indeed, soon after Petrarch passed away, there were peasant uprisings in Europe and in England where the nobles were enclosing the free lands of the people by force.

After the Black Death, the humanists in England raised no outcry against the Statutes of Laborers. Nor have we any record of champions, followers of Petrarch and Boccaccio, appearing in France and Italy to voice the rather large claims made for man in general. Quite the contrary! Until the appearance of Colet and Erasmus the humanists gathered under the banners of the opposing factions and discovered that the utopia of their dreams was no nearer to them than it had been to the murdered Cicero and the neglected Confucius.

Grocyn, Colet, Erasmus, and More

It was not until after the Wars of the Roses that another movement to which the name humanism has been attached appeared in England. Under the tutelage of William Grocyn, a Fellow of New College, Oxford, there gathered a company whose names meant more to men in general than all of those who were famous in the Italian Renaissance. That this movement in England differed profoundly from the one in which Petrarch and Boccaccio were engaged is plain because the leading figures were associated with the Church. Grocyn lectured at St. Paul's when John Colet was dean, and Erasmus found a friend in Archbishop Warham. Erasmus wrote:

> . . . I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning, and as soon as I get any money I shall buy Greek books—and then I shall buy some clothes. . . . I have found in Oxford so much polish and learning that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet it seems like listening to Plato himself. Who does not wonder at the wide range of Grocyn's knowledge? What can be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgement of Linacre? When did Nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than the temper of Thomas More? (J. R. Green, "Short History," p. 306).

This period, which began with Henry VII, would better bear the name of "rebirth" than the one started in Italy nearly two hundred years earlier. The desire for knowledge was noticeable not only in the universities that had become almost decadent, but in the Church itself. The King looked upon this quest for "the New Learning" with favor. And when Colet stormed from the pulpit of St. Paul's that the time had come for a complete reformation in the Church, beginning with the bishops, Henry defended him and told him to go on with his work. He said: "Let every man have his own doctor, and let every man favour his own, but this man is the doctor for me."

The spirit of the universities was revived, and one writing at the time says of the influx of new students: They "rush to Greek letters, they endure watching, fasting, toil, and hunger in the pursuit of them." However, when the King invaded France and was driven to conclude a peace, Colet declared from his pulpit that to see Henry turn into a vulgar conqueror was a bitter disappointment. And he cried, "An unjust peace is better than the justest war." Moreover, Erasmus departed from Cambridge shocked at the madness around him, which led him to declare:

. . . It is the people who build cities, while the madness of princes destroys them. Kings who are scarcely men are called "divine"; they are "invincible" though they fly from every battle-field; "serene" though they turn the world upside down in a storm of war; "illustrious" though they grovel in ignorance of all that is noble; "Catholic" though they follow anything rather than Christ. Of all birds the Eagle alone has seemed to wise men the type of royalty, a bird neither beautiful nor musical nor good for food, but murderous, greedy, hateful to all, the curse of all, and with its great powers of doing harm only surpassed by its desire to do it (Green, p. 312).

This marked the first revolt of a humanistic character by men of learning and influence in the interests of the people. It is amazing to read the story of how the cultural war initiated by these scholars was carried into the palace of the King and up to the very altars of the churches. Then Erasmus brought out his New Testament, and we learn "the Court, the Universities, every household to which the New Learning had penetrated, read and discussed it" (Green, p. 315).

But the humanism that directly concerned the aims and aspirations of the endeavors of man appeared in More's "Utopia," in which he charged the society round about him as "nothing but a conspiracy of the rich against the poor." He tells us:

. . . The rich are ever striving to pare away something further from the daily wages of the poor by private fraud and even by public law, so that the wrong already existing (for it is a wrong that those from whom the

State derives most benefit should receive least reward) is made yet greater by means of the law of the State. . . . The rich devise every means by which they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit at the lowest possible price the work and labour of the poor. And so soon as the rich decide on adopting these devices in the name of the public, then they become law (Green, p. 317).

It is in this unique work of Thomas More that we gather evidence of the grave change in economic conditions that affected the peasantry. He tells us of the enclosures made by force and how the people were driven from the land to make room for the sheep. Certainly a spirit of humanism was sadly wanting to relieve the impoverished people. Even then, progress in culture and learning seemed to go hand in hand with penury and want. But the humanists fared ill in any endeavor they made to set conditions right.

Next came Luther, who would have none of the New Learning. Reason to him was an evil and, after the so-called Reformation, the great revival which began under Henry VII suffered severely under the religious antagonisms that arose and the agrarian discontent caused by the enforced enclosure of the common fields and waste lands. Latimer has left a clear account of the vast changes that had taken place within his own lifetime. Moreover, the cost of war had emptied the treasury, and, as More points out, cut-throats, thieves and vagabonds increased in number notwithstanding the heavier penalties the new statues imposed. He proclaimed, "If you do not remedy the evils which produce thieves, the rigorous execution of justice in punishing them will be vain." Perhaps this was the last time in any humanist movement that such patent common sense was spoken.

The Humanism of Auguste Comte

It is impossible in a short essay to cover the ground adequately from the end of Elizabeth's reign until the rumblings of the French Revolution were heard. Never before in history were so many champions interested in the betterment of men in general, as were the leaders in France when the great reform movement of liberty, equality, and fraternity began. From Robespierre to Condorcet, from Danton to Marat, the ideals of humanism poured forth in copious phrases, while from the guillotine in Paris heads tumbled into the basket, and the other parts of France suffered a long period of shocking disorder. Every man suspected his neighbor, and treachery was the order of the day. Grand phrases, depraved creatures! The aims and aspirations that were to guide men to a better condition of affairs were lost in a sea of blood.

When the great change took place which marked the turn from the humanism of the Middle Ages, it is difficult to say. At any rate, the cult of antiquity, as it was known to Petrarch and Boccaccio, disappeared from the scene before the rise of Puritanism, and only echoes of it were heard from few in the halls of learning. Later, when rationalism became the vogue with certain thinkers, little thought was expended upon the aims and aspirations of man. Indeed, it may be said that the aesthetic and cultural pursuits of the well-to-do for the period when the English Whigs were in the ascendancy affected comparatively few collectors of works of art and rare books. It is hard to think of a well-known rationalist who showed the slightest inclination to follow the cult of the Italians of the early fourteenth century. What followed was in the nature of an almost complete departure from the pursuits of the medievalists both in society and in the Church.

The reverberations of the French Revolution had scarcely died away when there was born one whose writings were largely responsible for the creation of a new school of humanists who assumed great influence in England and America during the last half of the nineteenth century. Auguste Comte formed the Positive Society, and to his altar of rationalism there flocked many to worship the new god that he had created—humanity. He it was who dreamed of a science of society, and the principles and laws devised by him for a new utopia not only affected politicians but philosophers. It seems unbelievable now that the church of Comte should have been seriously considered by the utilitarians in England and in France. For they were associated with what was regarded as the great advance in scientific thought and the knowledge that was evident everywhere that society in the lump had failed to come anywhere near the realization of other dreamers, who had devoted themselves to its reformation.

Perhaps Comte expected too much of man and never got close enough to him to understand his waywardness. Otherwise he would not have announced:

> . . . In the name of the Past and of the Future, the servants of Humanity—both its philosophical and its practical servants—come forward to claim as their due the general direction of this world. Their object is to constitute at length a real Providence in all departments,—moral, intellectual and material. Consequently they exclude once for all from political supremacy all the different servants of God—Catholic, Protestant or Deist—as being at once behindhand and a cause of disturbance (*Enc. Brit.*, v. VI, p. 818).

However, it was clear to many before the twentieth century was ushered in that the servants of humanity were expending their efforts in

vain upon those they sought to edify. The Providence of Comte failed to direct the departments of the State. Never was the world in such an intellectual riot as it was before World War I blasted the claims of the humanists. Indeed, some of them admitted long before the war was over that society in general was better fitted for a madhouse than for a "definite social State, in which all means of human prosperity will receive their most complete development and most direct application."

The truth of the matter was that man showed not the slightest inclination to be reformed, according to the notions of philosophers and politicians. He, who knew where the shoe pinched, had a vague idea that the ethics of the Positive Church did not touch the cause of his daily woe. It did not strike Comte that Confucius had a better notion of what was wrong when he said: "If right principles ruled through the kingdom, there would be no necessity for me to change its state." It might be said that the medieval and classical authors had a far deeper understanding of what was at the root of man's troubles than Comte had.

The secret of its failure lay in the notion that the Positive Philosophy was to be a victory of the social feeling over self love, or altruism over egoism. It is true that Comte saw the necessity for a moral tranformation in society as the first step toward the goal. However, it was a mistaken altruism that preceded the attempt at a moral transformation. This brought about a philanthropy in politics and society which undermined the idea of those rights of man which had animated the souls and minds of the Physiocrats, including Turgot and the English philosophical economists, from the time of Hooker and Locke down to Adam Smith, Thomas Paine, and Cobden.

It is not so strange as some students of these political and social creeds imagine that, when the Positive Society was founded, Marx and Engels wrote "The Communist Manifesto." Moreover, Bakunin and Proudhon were busily engaged in formulating basic reforms for humanity which in idea differed fundamentally from that of Comte. As for the men and women who were to become members of the Positive Church and worship the great being Humanity, they showed their discontent with conditions by starting revolutions in different parts of Europe. And when they failed to set up governments after the pattern devised by their leaders, their political masters, almost scared out of their wits, started to pack the statute books full of ameliorative measures which were in the nature of sops and doles, as a means of keeping them quiet. The only two effective changes were wrought in England by the abolition of the Corn Laws and

in Gladstone's budgets by the remission of taxes which bore hardly upon the wages of labor.

The Growth of Bureaucratic Humanism

BUREAUCRATIC HUMANISM ran riot, once the government lent itself to be a milch cow to pacify the discontented. All sorts of private and church societies sprang up to do something for the poor, and even as early as fifty years ago, those who went into the distressed districts of the large towns often heard the jibe thrown at the altruists, "What a pleasure it is to do something for the poor!" Even the comic papers presented pictures of amateur well-to-do parish visitors giving the advice formulated in drawing rooms of how to nurse children of the wretched and provide them with proper nourishment.

When the humanists realized that the legislation enacted for the relief of poverty and its attendant ills called for a larger bureaucracy, not a few admitted that it was time to try some other way to better conditions. But once parish relief and the dole were begun, it was impossible to turn back, and the greater the bureaucracy engaged in this work grew, the more need there was for largesse to keep the distressed people quiet. The student has only to turn to the record of the legislation that reached the statute book during the eight years before World War I to be convinced of this.

There were a few right-minded critics of the new system who did not hesitate to point out that man was perfectly capable of attending to his own affairs if he would only take the trouble to know the causes of his material afflictions. One hundred years ago he had a definite idea of what his rights were; otherwise, the great advances that were made here, in England, and on the continent of Europe could not have been achieved. Grudgingly, his political masters bowed to some of his demands, and at one time it seemed to thinkers who were not utopians that they saw the gleam of a new day.

Thoughtful working men during the political campaigns of forty years ago were saying to their parliamentary leaders, "Leave it to us. We know what we want." This cry is not heard today, and so long as the bureaucracy can purchase the votes by bribes and doles, there is little chance of such a demand being made again.

False altruism and spurious philanthropy have been largely the undoing of the masses. According to the reports made by government bureaus of investigation, man has been emasculated. The churches submit to the notion that the Creator bungled the whole job by not providing a source large enough to supply the desires and needs of His creatures—a blasphemy

that can scarcely be matched. No wonder some are inclined to the notion that the vast majority of humans may be classified as men only because they walk upright.

The Dignity of Man as an Individual

For a thoroughgoing review of the position in which we find ourselves today, there is nothing quite like the Gifford Lectures of Dr. Macneile Dixon, "The Human Situation." This critique is not only the most powerful one that has come from the pen of a philosopher of this generation; it is, besides, the most essential for a proper understanding of the course that we have taken. Here we have a wide learning combined with a shrewd knowledge of man and his potentialities. There is not an activity of spiritual and physical existence that is overlooked in this work. The author says: "Men ask for nothing from the universe save justice, and they have not obtained it" (p. 422).

Here the key word implies everything fundamentally, and by it Dr. Dixon means the justice that was in the mind of Socrates and Jesus. If men as individuals cannot take care of themselves, why should altruism and philanthropy be given to save them from the fate that they deserve? In "The Human Situation" we read:

> . . . In their anxiety for human welfare, in their collectivist schemes, the sentimentalists have overlooked the individual man. They submerge him in the sea of their universal benevolence. But who desires to live in the pauperdom of their charity? Every man desires to be his own architect, and the creator of his own design, the sentimentalist himself among the rest. And the last and greatest insult you can offer to the human race is to regard it as a herd of cattle to be driven to your selected pasture. You deprive the individual of his last rag of self-respect, the most precious of his possessions, himself. If you treat him as a thing, an inanimate object which can be pushed hither and thither, if you treat him as one of a drove of oxen, you take away his birthright, and for this loss nothing can compensate him, not all the soothing syrups and honeys of the world (pp. 189–90).

This is to the point, and the denunciation is not a bit too strong. And, yet, the humanists who flocked into the political arena after the turn of the century were sincere men and undoubtedly thought their efforts would relieve the wretched. When one thinks of these rationalists—many of them declared followers of Comte—it is hard to understand why they imagined their indiscriminate charity, their altruistic schemes would in any way alter the conditions that were responsible for the deepening poverty. No wonder Bishop Creighton lost patience with some of them and said they are "as good as gold and fit for heaven, but of no earthly use."

The dole is the paltriest substitute for justice. Indeed, it should now be patent to everyone that it has been a cruel deterrent, for had it not been for the false altruism that spread like miasma into the halls of legislatures, it might have been possible before World War I to deal with fundamental reform here and in England.

Such a book as "The Human Situation" is not only a spiritual tonic that should be taken by our sociologists; it is a revelation of the nonsensical beliefs and the legislative stupidities of this generation. The all-round knowledge of Dixon is in itself a magnet that draws the reader on and on in the most convincing manner. No one who has written in recent years upon the conditions of the world has a higher appreciation of man than he has. And his appeal to the churches, the scientists, and the politicians to let him express himself and face economic pressure according to the tradition of the race should be irresistible, if they mean business.

There is the choice that must be made at once. It cannot be put off much longer. It is the choice that was offered by Moses—life or death; the one presented to every civilization of which we have record. If it be life, then justice is the essential. If not, neither rationalist nor humanist can save man from the fate that he has earned.

New York

The Family Farm in the United States

CONSIDERING that United States agricultural output, together with those of Canada and Australia, saved the world from famine after the recent war, it should be fairly well known that American farming is characterized by high productivity, brought about chiefly by mechanization and scientific management. What is not so well known abroad is that most American farms are family farms. Vergil D. Reed, associate director of research of the J. Walter Thompson Company, points out that family farms account for roughly 80 per cent of farm products marketed. Except for about 2 per cent of the total number of farms, farming is still a family enterprise in the United States. Because the anti-social corporation farm is usually a very large scale enterprise, however, it occupies a larger percentage of the cultivated land area.

W.L.