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CATO

OR

THE FUTURE OF CENSORSHIP

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

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CATO

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THE FUTURE OF CENSORSHIP

BY

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To
MIRIAM

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THE FUTURE OF CENSORSHIP

I.—FIRST PRINCIPLES

EVEN when concerned with the censorship of ideas, it is well to recognize at the outset that censorship in its widest sense includes all the restraints which have been imposed, not only upon art and thought, but upon Life. In this sense, censorship far from representing the greatest obstacle to man's progress is rather the painful but beneficient process which has changed the savage into true Homo Sapiens. As thus understood, censorship is illustrated not only by blue laws against Sabbath-breaking, dancing and gambling, but by

laws against murder, arson and theft. Indeed, the censorship of man's actions must be older than that of his ideas. The mechanisms of censorship have been transformed from the totemism and taboo of the savage to the moral prohibitions of the custom and law of civilized man. The objectives of censorship have varied to meet the changing character of civilization. But censorship has persisted since man first became a social animal.

The censorship of ideas has been perennial and it is agreed that ideas are important. It is unnecessary to bemoan eloquently the great martyrs—Socrates, Jesus, Galileo—who were suppressed in vain. It is the lesser ones who testify to the foolishness of mankind. All it has learned in two thousand years is to make victims instead of martyrs. Subjected to the humiliation of misdemeanour in our less sombre age, they sit at home, or travel in the Riviera, while members of the bar with a flair

for literary connections argue over their works in the law courts. Areopagiticas are no longer thundered these days. We boast the intimate conversations of Mr. George Moore, the prefaces at large of Mr. Bernard Shaw, and the anti-puritanical homilies of Mr. H. L. Mencken.

The prospect of censorship is one of changing rather than disappearing forms. As in the past the great battles against censorship have been fought in the name of the freedom of thought, they are now fought in the name of the freedom of art. We shall increasingly talk less and less of the conflict between science and religion and more and more of the conflict between science and art. The change will itself be found significant. To the modern art has come to transcend life even as it includes it. The censorship of art is recognized to be a double censorship of which the process of art is already the first and more stringent. Yet there is a draw-

back to this preoccupation in the tendency to forget the relation which the censorship of art bears to the censorship of life. Art always seems " beyond life." But references to the sanctity of art miss the political nature and function of all censorship. In the last analysis all censorship is political censorship. The artist is inclined to denounce such a view as Philistine but it must follow from the very nature of the State that if it has exercised a surveillance over art, it has acted rather for its own protection than in the interests of æsthetics : the safety of the State is the first rule of its existence.

The censorship of life in any age has been a multiplicity of specific prohibitions. Not even the people of the Book had simply Ten Commandments. The modern penal code has at least ten thousand. But the censorship of ideas has been a succession of major formulæ. Every age has struggled to find a leading formula for its test of virtue and

the good life. It has always derived it from its dominant interest, and it has always been some form of absolutism. There have thus far been three great formulæ: those of political, theological, and sexual absolutism. With shifts of emphasis, the formulæ of political and theological loyalty have usually operated together. But the application of no formula must be taken at its face value. They are too complex and inclusive to be more than significant guides to a great variety of purposes. Their convenience would be destroyed if reduced to exact definition. It is the precise usefulness of a great formula that it includes within its scope all subversive ideas which cannot be foreseen and forbidden in advance.

The censorship of the ancient world was a rigorous political censorship. As developed in its highest form, it was the censorship of the monistic State which went to the extent of the deification of its head to exclude all possible schism.

When the cross of Cæsarism had become the symbol of a world religion, the great virtue became faith, and the great formula heresy. With the Reformation what had been heresy in the now Protestant countries was converted into blasphemy, and bitterly fought, for the Reformation was itself too great and unsettling a heresy. The Protestant as well as the Catholic State maintained religion as a test of virtue, but the monarch who regarded himself as the Defender of the Faith increasingly conceived it as only one of his functions. The formula of faith was to hold sway over the imaginations of men for many centuries, but it was the absolute State emerging from its feudal lethargy that counted more and more. Treason became as great a crime as "maiestas" had been. The conflict of the formulæ of religious and political absolutism is very pointedly illustrated in the cases where the State suppressed works arguing against the temporal power of

princes after they had been approved by papal colleges of censors. But neither the absolutism of State nor Church bothered much with the suppression of erotic literature. Emperors were too holy and Roman, and popes were too infallible. The treatment of Boccacio's Decameron may be taken to mark these times from our own: the Decameron was, indeed, censored but only to remove the slur upon Churchmen exhibited in amorous dalliance; all the erotic passages are left intact except that the erring clerics are changed into dukes, counts and fairies.

Under all formulæ, a necessary condition precedent to the actual exercise of censorship has been the danger of popular contagion. No art and no thought are suppressed as long as they are not or cannot be widely communicated. The ruling classes have always been permitted to play with ideas and indulge in amusements which are forbidden to their inferiors. The

danger that they might spread from the upper to the lower ranks of society has only been slightly regarded. The censor himself, who is constantly exposed to corruption, is never suspected. No better proof can be demanded that there is no intrinsic hostility on the part of authority to the experimentation with ideas. They are absolutely tolerated until they have reached the classes where they may do harm. This rule is so fundamental that it has operated at all times under every conceivable form of government.

Hence it is that in the ancient world censorship was rare. Certainly authority was not more tolerant. Where it did suppress it acted uncompromisingly and savagely. The paucity of examples of literary censorship is explained by the impossibility of popular contagion. There was as yet no ready mechanical means for the communication of ideas. This remained undoubtedly the case as long as mankind employed intricate

characters on clay tablets to express ideas. Yet censorship did not have much greater scope when mankind had reached the manuscript period as in the Græco-Roman world. The ancient cases of literary censorship are inconsiderable: Protagoras, Hegesias, Hermogenes of Tarsus and a few others almost exhaust the list. The servile population had *panem et circenses*, not books. But where there was a popular theatre among the ancients, plays may be found occasionally suppressed. Even the profligate Ovid speaks of the demoralization of the theatre! When old Jeremy Collier castigated the Restoration stage, he had no difficulty in quoting the classic authors for his purpose.

Censorship began in earnest only when the diabolical printing press had made its appearance. It initiated the process now known as the democratization of life which churchmen and statesmen all feared, not knowing

the paradoxical ways of democracy. They instituted licensed printing and the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* and organized royal and papal colleges of censors to prevent the circulation of heretical and seditious ideas. They made use of the mediæval guilds such as the English Stationers' Company and the Venetian Guild of Printers and Publishers to control the vagrant printers and ordered that they be given work at all costs to keep them out of mischief. Authors began their co-operation with censorship by applying for copyright to protect the product of their labour and received their monopolies in exchange for the Imprimatur. This was the "previous" censorship which is now such an abomination to every lover of freedom.

In an age of theological speculation and political theorizing books were particularly subjected to stringent censorship. However, even now literary censorship is the crux of all censorship.

Books are the chief conveyors of ideas. Again, it is the danger of popular contagion that causes them to be singled out. There is no such thing as a general censorship of art or ideas. Censors have always recognized that not all vehicles of infection have equal capacity for harm. In the very nature of things the arts which are only slightly concerned with the direct communication of ideas are practically exempt. No wonder there is insistence upon art for art's sake. No one has ever heard of the censorship of architecture. There is no record of the censorship of Bach or Beethoven. It is the representational character of sculpture and painting which has caused such alarm as there has been among moralists since these arts emancipated themselves from Christianity and ceased to be art for God's sake.

The rules of expediency led to phenomena of censorship which are reminiscent of our own times, although

we live under a quite different formula. When a book was attacked as blasphemous, the iconoclasts demanded the suppression of the Bible, citing the blasphemous passages, and Job, who cursed God and wished to die, was held up as a frightful example. When Shelley's *Queen Mab* was prosecuted, Milton's *Paradise Lost* was the classic that was held to justify its blasphemy. Youth would be sure to be led astray when Lucifer was clothed in almost greater splendour than God! The precautions taken against subversive pamphlets were greater than in the case of large tomes comprehensible only to the learned. The pillars of society talked of "penny treason" and "penny blasphemy" and viewed with anxiety the "reading of the antechamber." The astute Pitt, when pressed to prosecute William Godwin's *An Inquiry Concerning Political Justice*, refused on the ground that the book cost three guineas. "A book," he said, "can

never do much harm among those who have not three shillings to spare."

Since those days the world is supposed to have advanced in democratic enlightenment. Where censorship exists it is taken to bespeak a survival of tyranny. Where it seemed natural in the days of the Star Chamber, it now seems a strange anachronism. Such religious and political censorship as is still exercised in Anglo-Saxon countries is almost denied. The formalist refuses to admit that censorship by subsequent criminal prosecution is really censorship. Indeed, he boasts that freedom is the privilege of going to jail for one's opinions. Such countries as Spain and Poland have political censorships, but they are taken to have hardly emerged from the Dark Ages. Russia and Italy have censorships, but they live under Bolshevism and Fascism, which are called the Red and White terrors respectively. In war and revolution and conditions of turmoil it is possible to excuse censor-

ship: it is tyranny of the moment of crisis for the sake of maintaining order.

Yet censorship exists in every peaceful democratic community. Democracy is still a form of government. Its conditions, indeed, make censorship more imperative than ever. The more government is recognized to be based upon "consent," the more essential it becomes that the governed should consent to the will of the governors only. Actually there can be no more political than theological "freewill." Politically speaking man is only free to agree with the State. When freedom is supposed to be "guaranteed," however, there is more danger of caprice. Vigilance is the eternal price of liberty on both sides. The only difference now is that authority is estopped from brutal frankness. The only change made by democracy is, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed, that it "immaterializes despotism." The methods of control become more subtle and complicated

and indirect, but they hardly cease. The early dread of education has disappeared as its advantages have been realized: the educated and democratic citizen can be more deftly ordered by reason than the ignorant and brutalized slave was kept to obedience by force. The only result of democracy has been to make the business of censorship vastly more ingenious.

II.—FROM CATO TO COMSTOCK

THE normal censorship of our times is the sex censorship—and it is normal only in its abnormality. One of the disgusted Victorian critics happily described it as the " Ptolemaic system of sex." Our age is the asterisk age. The great crime is now neither blasphemous nor seditious libel, but " obscene libel." We denounce works of art by numerous synonyms as lewd, lascivious, indecent and obscene, until we run short of breath. We recognize the categorical imperative of sex.

Although we talk readily about obscenity, it is really as mysterious as electricity and no less dangerous. Everybody fears but nobody knows what obscenity is. We hear a babel of voices, and find a confusion of practices,

but nevertheless all the first principles may be observed in application. Obscenity is discovered to have both temporal and spatial aspects. A book, or a play, or a picture, which was absolutely forbidden in one decade causes hardly any excitement in the next. Indeed, a book which is banned as obscene on one Monday by one judge is declared to be virtuous art by another judge the next Wednesday. A book that is judicially determined to be immoral in Boston is allowed to circulate freely in London and New York. There apparently is also a statute of limitations on obscenity, when it is in classic form. Our neuroses make us cry aloud for the suppression of the Bible and William Shakespeare whenever an Elinor Glyn is attacked. Again, the price of a book if it is sufficiently high may remove it entirely from the category of the obscene. If it is "privately printed," and its circulation is confined to physicians, clergymen, and lawyers, it is

doubly safe. There is thus a rigorous distinction of classes when it comes to the enjoyment of obscenity. A person, too, who can read a foreign language does not require protection. Obscene books in foreign languages are considered immune from attack.

But most important of all, the degree of censorship is still not the same for all forms of art. Some are treated as if they were superior vehicles of infection. The censorship of books, newspapers, magazines, music or painting is now managed by the more democratic method of subsequent censorship. But plays are still often subjected to previous censorship, as by the Lord Chamberlain. Even in New York, a severe padlock law makes possible the closing of a theatre for a year when it has housed an immoral play. To the movies a previous censorship by Official Boards of Censorship is almost universally applied. The arts which have won to the greatest freedom since the

early days of Victorianism are music and painting which are now hardly ever molested in their sanctuaries of the concert hall and museum. The press is now perhaps the freest medium for the conveyance of obscenity. The great Anglo-Saxon principle of the freedom of the press has protected the freedom of the tabloids.

Neither previous nor subsequent censorship, however, is considered the perfect form. There is a tendency towards a subterranean censorship. The palpable interference of the government is avoided, or some other pretext for its action than the real one is found. Censorship is always made incidental to some other function. The post office or customs officials are merely occupied in keeping the mails or commerce pure. The psychological mechanism involved is to think of obscenity as a crime like murder, arson and rape, so that its eradication comes to be regarded not as the exercise of censorship but as law

enforcement. Better still is the accomplishment of censorship by institutions such as public libraries which officially are not vested with the function at all, or better still by private or circulating libraries which can be conceived as entitled to manage their own business. When the public finally does intervene it is usually in the person of a vice-secretary. It is his great virtue that he is an officer of government in all but name.

It is of even greater interest that there is a distinction made between two types of obscenity which are easily recognizable despite the vagueness of the general term. The first type of obscenity consists simply of an excessive sexualism or eroticism in any work which contravenes the sense of shame resulting from the mores of the community. In the second type of obscenity the sexual exhibitionism is usually very slight but there is a distinct tendency manifested towards

bringing accepted morality into contumely or contempt. The first kind of obscenity we may call the obscenity of established sin and the second "critical" obscenity. The first is tolerated and enjoys a comparative immunity. The second is always regarded with suspicion, and is suppressed as soon as its implications are understood with a vigour which is only subject to the limitation of human energy. It is a rule that "smut" is safer than an "immoral" treatment of theme and character. A popular but risque revue may venture all but absolute nudity and every variety of double meaning. A serious play, such as *The Captive*, or *Maya*, is at once treated as a menace. Radicalism in sexual morals is the worst kind of obscenity. All discussions of birth control are considered, *ipso facto*, obscene.

The greatest urge behind all the hysterical campaigns against indecent

literature has had its basis in a desire to protect children especially from smut. This has been one of the few novel changes since the days of theological censorship when inquisitors strained every nerve to save immortal souls without distinction of age, condition or sex. The modern censorship has an infantile premise which particularly distinguishes it. The remarkable fact, however, is that the laws of obscenity are of general application applying to both adult and child. Although we no longer use the phrase, a book still has to be fit to "lie on the drawing-room table," and be suitable for the "young person." If authors are no longer the recipients of letters from agitated parents scolding them for bringing blushes to the cheeks of their daughters, they owe the relief to Charles Lamb. Asked one day how he liked children, he replied drily, "Boiled."

A visitor from a rational planet would be puzzled by the nature of the modern

sex censorship. It is not supposed to be a censorship of ideas. A campaign against obscenity is presumably an exercise of the police power against vice. As a possible excitant to unconformity it seems remote in its effects. If the sex censorship is concerned simply with the protection of the sexual instincts, a great many of present practices seem extreme and absurd. If, on the other hand, its objective is also the protection of ideas of sexual morality, they are readily understandable. If the sex censorship is simply another phase of the eternal censorship of ideas, the dangers of popular contagion explain the immunity of some arts compared with others, the importance of the factors of price, language and classic character, and, above all, the scrutiny of sexual radicalism, and the profound anxiety for the possible contamination of the young. What is exceptional in the ways of the censorship is the result of such progress as

democracy has made. Its inconsistencies are the clue to the very reasons for the adoption of the formula of sex. As long as these reasons hold good the formula must remain.

To begin with there are two very significant facts. The sex censorship did not culminate in its most extreme forms until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and it flourished best in the Anglo-Saxon countries. As a result, it is, indeed, customary to dismiss the worship of decency simply as "Puritanism." But there have been periods of Puritanism among many peoples, ancient as well as modern. A consciousness of indecency in art has obtained among all peoples who have had enough civilization to produce art. One has only to read Plato's warning against Homer, or Aristotle's remarks about the dangers of taking young people to the theatre. The fable has it that Cato struck the name of a Roman

from the lists for kissing his wife before their unmarried daughter. The perfect Greeks in their later days banished the plays of Aristophanes from their stage. In all Christian centuries, there have been extremists to decry erotic art, and one has only to recall that Pope Pius V. wanted Michaelangelo's "Last Judgment" to be made less indecent. But Greek and Roman and Catholic Puritanism are no more the sex censorship than early English Puritanism. A long line of Puritan pamphleteers testifies to the zeal with which English Puritanism attacked indecent books and plays. But the Puritan has always regarded immorality in art as well as in life simply as a dangerous drug, which interfered with the habits of industry and good citizenship: his attitude towards obscenity was the same as the modern Prohibitionist's towards drink, and he condemned both in the name of God.

However, English Puritanism approx-

imated the sex censorship. Its earlier maturity in England is to be explained by the earlier destruction of political absolutism there. The historian who speaks of the destruction of feudalism and the rise of political liberty begins invariably with England, and "Anglo-Saxon" has long been considered a necessary adjective to describe "freedom." What is usually missed, however, is that surrogates were found. It is interesting that despite considerable advances in popular education and self-government, a long period was still to elapse before the formula of sex would be invoked. There was an increased emphasis upon religious piety and the late Puritans whom we call Victorians inaugurated rather the long series of prosecutions for blasphemy against such rationalists as Carlyle, Bradlaugh, Holyoake, Foote and Annie Besant, which were the paradox of "liberal" England.

There was then also not only a large

middle class but a large reading middle class, and the circulating library was already spoken of as " an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge." But more than popular education and democracy are necessary conditions of the sex censorship. The democratization of life had still to be completed by the secularization of life. In other words, religion had to be undermined by science. When Darwinism shocked the Victorian world, the fear that was most frequently expressed was precisely that its materialism would remove all incentive to right conduct and lead in the end to the collapse of civilization. It was only then that sexual morality came to coincide with morality. It is the distinguishing mark of the sex censorship that it is the secular formula of a whole age. It includes the old Puritanism, but at the same time it transcends it. Cato would never have understood Comstock. The manifestations of the sex censorship have aroused the ire and

exhausted the patience of countless critics but fundamentally it marked the transition to civilization.

The confused modern world needed a formula more than ever. It returned to the ultimate reality of sex. Love remained as the only bond of human fellowship. For the very reason that it was now touched with the corroding poisons of cynicism and despair it needed to be guarded more jealously than ever. The sexual instincts and sexual morals became the centre of life as they were now of the individual's energies and a new phallicism emerged by way of inversion. The age of popular art naturally became the Age of the Libido. Before Freudianism had appeared as a conscious psychology to explain the new age, it had appeared in subconscious action. It was Freudianism that finally revealed the neuroses of the censors, and it is little to wonder that it was received with horror (the liberal Edmund Gosse called the

Freudians "dirty devils"), and that Freudian works have been suppressed. The savage's dread of incest is hardly worse than the modern's dread of the obscene. The neurosis hardly differs from the taboo. The rage for decency has become all but indecent. To the pure all things are impure is the modern version of holy writ.

The control of sex must be the very centre of a secular system of ethics. The postponement of marriage to a much later age than has been common under a simpler economy than industrialism has resulted often in the starvation of the sexual instincts under conditions which have made any conscious discipline of ascetism impossible. The institution of the family has had to be exalted as the very basis of the individual's loyalty when he threatened to stumble on the paths of virtue. It was the only remaining great bridge between the citizen and the State under individualism. Sexual morality is

particularly important to the preservation of the family. Art is the religion of secularism, but it is the novel especially which has received the most anxious scrutiny since it tells a love story. A novel may well be defined as an immoral book. Constant reader, constant censor.

Only the formula of the sex censorship could cope with all the seductions of art and all the moods of the artist. Yet it is well to realize that in the last analysis the existence of a formula is more important than its actual character. Under the conditions of modern life sexual radicalism is undoubtedly the best symptom of radicalism in general. The man who beats his wife may have sound ideas about private property. But the man who is in favour of free love and companionate marriage is almost certain to lend a sympathetic ear towards socialism and communism. To preach birth control may be sedition and blasphemy as well

as obscenity: it is sedition to decrease the possible number of soldiers for the State; it is blasphemy to violate God's command to "increase and multiply and replenish the earth."

III.—CRUSADE OF THE LIBIDO

WITH that periodicity whereby morality is vindicated until the next time, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, obscenity has become a great public issue again. During the War the sex censorship appeared to be quiescent in those countries subject to its ravages, and its victims for a short time afterwards might have congratulated themselves that at last the age of democracy had passed the stresses of its adolescence if at terrible cost. But the sex censorship has always abated during the fevers of war and periods of great national excitement. The moral chaos which is supposed to have followed the last war, however, has apparently made it necessary to revive old habits. Officially agitated persons, such as

judges, customs inspectors, postmasters, vice-secretaries and home secretaries, descant anew upon the scarlet peril, and Comstockery is seen to be a living heritage. It is true that art is not entirely a Victorian hurdle of morality, and that the limitations of the censorship are no longer the recognized canons of æsthetics, but we still have limits which if they may be more nearly approached may not be exceeded with impunity.

In Boston the index of forbidden books has grown incredibly long. The shocking-point in cosmopolitan New York is now lower than in the great days of Comstock, but in recent years great battles have been waged over such classics as the *Satyricon* and *Mademoiselle de Maupin*. At present the whole Anglo-Saxon world is in a ferment over Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. Condemned in London, and its very mention hardly allowed in Boston, it circulates freely in New York,

where it has been exculpated by judicial decision. *The Well of Loneliness*, indeed, has been the signal for a whole series of suppressions, including Norah C. James' *Sleeveless Errand*, D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*. Ireland, struggling to independence, seeks to give expression to its Catholic neo-Puritanism in a way which is even looked at askance in Britain. Catholic Dublin begins to rival Catholic Boston as if to compensate for the earlier laxity of the faith, and its bans include such marvels as Papini's *Story of Christ*, Conan Doyle's *Coming of the Fairies* and Herbert Spencer's *Sociology*. In Paris, which to the Anglo-Saxon is the very citadel and shrine of indecency, the denizens of the Left Bank a few years ago had occasion to laugh at the expulsion of Victor Marguerite from the Legion of Honour for writing *La Garçonne*. In democratic Germany, wholesale raids of Freudian literature

have been the order of the day and a Literary-Trash-and-Mud-Law has been enacted. The liberated nations of Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary and Fascist Italy plan similar laws. If the European temperament has proved no obstacle to the march of literary decency, Puritanism must be beside the point indeed.

On the basis of such phenomena it would be easy to give free reign to the imagination and predict the most fantastic future for the sex censorship. The nations which cherish it at present would bend every energy to the task of wiping out obscenity within their own frontiers as if it were the plague. The greatest difficulties would stand in the way of Federal nations which do not have centralized administration in internal matters of police. To avoid the disharmony which at present exists among various classes of officials and secure a more rigorous enforcement of the law, a National Board of Complete

Censorship would be organized in each country with absolute jurisdiction over every art and artist. Thereafter all disagreements would disappear between local, state and national authorities as rulings and licenses would issue from the central office only.

In the United States, which has suffered particularly from the scandals of diversity, the change would be accomplished by a Twentieth Amendment to the federal Constitution, called the Inhibition Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture or sale of any book, play, painting, musical composition, or any other work of art which contained more than one-half of one per cent. of sexual kick. Similar amendments would be quickly adopted elsewhere, as an idea once adopted in America is bound to sweep the world. Everywhere the present technique of law enforcement under Liquor Prohibition would be inaugurated. At first, of course, there would be widespread violation of

the law: many of the circulating libraries which now barely manage to get along would be turned into read-easies where indecent books and plays could be read for a fee, the size of which would depend on the nature of the work, an ordinary novel costing less than one marked " privately printed." Similarly there would spring up play-easies and talk-easies, although these would entail so many obstacles that attendance could be afforded only by the most plutocratic. The buildings of the present " little theatre movements " might be used after their architecture was disguised to make them resemble churches or the club houses of fraternal orders. The read-easies would escape for a long time, as books, unlike intoxicating beverages, cannot be detected by their own or their readers' odours, and clever manufacturers of furniture could easily devise pieces where they could be easily hidden from the Inhibition Agents at a moment's notice. However, in the end

all attempts at the evasion of the law would fail as more and more money was secured by the Anti-Read-easy Leagues, with headquarters in Boston, and more and more Inhibition Units were organized. Any person observed coming out of a house, or even walking down the street giggling, blushing, smirking or chuckling would be conclusively presumed to have violated the law. The turning-point in the campaigns against obscenity would be reached probably when critics who were jealous of the huge, illicit earnings of novelists, poets and playwrights, turned spies, informers and provocative agents. The time would come when Inhibition agents would be armed with rifles and shotguns and instructed to shoot in the back all elderly roués suspected of transporting a Rabelais or *Candide*, in their automobiles after reading the same to their nephews and nieces. Those who were habitual offenders would as an ultimate penalty be condemned to act

as censors: a book, or a play, or a motion picture would be adjudged to have more than one-half of one per cent. of sexual kick if such hardened sinners did not fall asleep over it.

However, all these efforts would prove vain unless the eradication of obscenity could be organized on a world basis. If erotica existed in any country they would in the natural course of events find their way to others. A twelve-mile Inhibition Limit would accomplish very little: the stoutest obscene literature coastguard cutters would fail in their war against the organized bookleggers; even christening the cutters the *Comstock I*, *Coote II*, *Sumner III*, or *Deschamp IV*, would fail to strike terror in their hearts; the profits would simply be too large. But again the remedy would be found. On all sides we hear that this is the age of international organization. Not only will there be a United States of Europe, but a World Community. As the evil

drug traffic has been fought by international agreement, the traffic in obscene literature will be attacked in the same way but with much greater effectiveness. For by this time the League of Nations will have established its authority. Disarmament accomplished it would turn its attention to disinfection. Imagine impassioned speeches of international jurists in the Assembly of the League of Nations pleading for the cause of decency, and French, German, British and American delegates weeping tears on each others' shoulders. To the International Labour Office would be added a disinfection office to deal with the literary White Slave Traffic.

A great crusade in the holy name of the neurosis would be declared to establish the standards of decency in such remote and uncivilized portions of the earth as are as yet not subject to their influence. Mandates of purity would be given over in trust to the great

civilized nations. Knights of purity, with the symbol of the fig leaf on their breasts, led by the vice-secretaries-in-chief of the respective national contingents, would pursue the terrified Arabs across the furthermost wastes of their deserts, rifle in one hand and carefully-censored copies of *What Every Girl Should Know* in the other. The alternative would be "read or die." As resistance might be expected in Arabia, the mandate would naturally have to be entrusted to Great Britain, which has the great honour of having first brought sex censorship into existence, and nurtured it to vigour from a rudimentary Puritanism. Persia, whose rulers have lately shown signs of absorbing Western civilization, would prove an easier trust and might be left to converted France. Anon cries for the suppression of Omar Khayam would rise on every side. But not even the most savage tribes would be allowed to escape: to American enterprise would

be left the task of introducing decency to Zanzibar, Australasia, Polynesia, and the remotest Hebrides. Thus would the imperialism of oil and rubber be sublimated in the extension of Taboo.

If these reforms are carried out, the art of the period is easy to imagine. The nude would, of course, be banished again and still-life only be permitted to painters, who nevertheless would be carefully watched to prevent them from developing a sexual symbolism in the representation of certain rotund and angular objects. Cubism and vorticism and other similar schools of painting would reign supreme. The new art critics would establish their origins in late Victorianism, explaining their appearance as having been due to a conscious desire to avoid giving offense to the sense of shame by substituting geometrical forms for living ones. The literature of the time would be supplied partly by a revival of Victorian books and plays. Such libraries as " Every-

man's " and " The Modern Library," having disappeared, their place would be taken by a great library of Victorian classics issued in three volumes as a reminder of good old times. It would probably be called " The Bowdler Library." What new literature there is would consist almost solely of animal stories and animal masques such as have been popular in earlier centuries. The surviving craving for love stories would be sublimated by a symbolic handling of the passions of fauns, otters, zebras, elephants and foxes, and domestic tragedy would deal with the problems of dogs, sheep, cows, horses and barnyard fowl. A realistic school of literary criticism would debate if this literature is " true to life," and the *reductio ad absurdum* of realism would finally have been reached. This outcome is already foreshadowed, for all one knows, in the wide popularity which has been achieved by such books as Henry Williamson's *Tarka, the Otter*, and Felix Salten's *Bambi*.

IV.—INTIMATIONS OF IMMORALITY

HOWEVER, the difficulty with the fantasies of absolute logic is that they rarely, if ever, come true. Nevertheless, the actual possibilities are no less fantastic when regarded from present points of view.

It has been often declared that obscenity is a modern counterpart of mediæval witchcraft. The latter has been shown to be a formula which, remarkably enough, operated as a censorship of life in an age which was dominated by a single passion. According to this interpretation witchcraft was employed as a convenient charge in an age of faith against the subversive activities of many cults which had survived from paganism and threatened

the security of a church which claimed to be universal. Amazement is then expressed that obscenity should be taken seriously in a scientific age in which witchcraft has become preposterous.

Unfortunately it is impossible to be very optimistic about the immediate disappearance of obscenity. There is an obvious difference between witchcraft and obscenity in the fact that the latter has a fundamental basis of reality in the sexual instincts. The robust future of the sex censorship can well be imagined when it is alone considered that the family will hardly vanish as rapidly as is predicted, nor will parents and sisters and cousins and aunts. It has been suggested that the sex censorship in its origin was a paradoxical indication of the growth of civilization towards maturity. If it is to continue to grow towards an ever more realized maturity, there are bound to be more growing pains. This, of course, neces-

sarily assumes that our society which has aptly come to be called the Great Society will realize its potentialities. It may be objected that there is no guarantee that civilization will not break down (indeed, the prophets of collapse are numerous), and that we shall relapse into a barbarism which will make future historians say that the Great Society was neither great nor a society. Well, there is force in the objection, but if we are to have not the millennium but cataclysm there is no further need of prophesying! If we are to have darkness, we shall have no sex censorship, for the same reasons that it did not exist in the turmoils of the past Dark Ages.

The next stage of society may well begin with a period of neo-Victorianism. Indeed, if one may judge from present signs the reactions to the moral anarchy of the last few decades has already been inaugurated. Moralists begin to find themselves disconcertingly popular.

The scientific materialism of the late nineteenth century gives way in a universe of relativity and atomic freedom proclaimed by Einsteins and Eddingtons, and man recovers his moral responsibility. Not the least remarkable feature of the new moral revival may be its derivation from Freudianism. The Freudian delineation of maturity as submission to reality is in effect a recognition of the validity of an ascetic principle of renunciation. Moreover, Freudianism, it must be remembered, has not had the full courage of its complexes in refraining from urging the individualization of the morality of sex.

It has been pointed out that however vague the concept of obscenity is, it is possible broadly to distinguish the two types of "critical" obscenity and the "obscenity of established sin." However much present practice may make it appear startling, it will be critical obscenity that will first be eliminated, and the sex censorship will be less and

less concerned with guarding against the criticism of sexual morality either directly in the discussion of ideas or indirectly in the implications arising from a work of art. The new Victorians, the first children of the Great State, will on the whole be tolerant towards honest criticism of established sexual morality, since they will be enlightened and well-informed, and appeal to truth rather than authority. Already it is to be observed that advocacy of birth control is no longer in itself criminal even if the law here and there lags. In transition there may be forbidden certain themes in art such as perversion or prostitution as part of an effort to deal with them clinically (instead of to conceal vice as at present), but this will be accomplished not under the general prohibition of obscenity but under specific enactments. This, indeed, will be the general tendency to narrow the general concept by forbidding the treatment of certain themes of sexual morality in

particular crises. As a general protection, there will be introduced the doctrine that is now fundamental to the law of libel: that publication or exhibition for good motives and justifiable ends is an excuse—a rule that is in effect already with regard to the press.

Very little sympathy, however, will be shown towards that type of obscenity which consists of the outrage of the sense of shame. The sexual instincts, until all the ugliness has been removed from life, are bound to remain a subject of concern even if no longer the subject of censorship. To the new Victorians the import of Freudianism for the sex censorship as it concerns the protection of children from " smut " will be very alarming. In this regard educated parents of to-day (as opposed to the so-called " under-privileged " parents who are the despair of social workers) already often resemble their Victorian sires. If psychoanalysis has made us freer in revealing the nature of the fears

and compulsion neuroses which have made the very mention of the word sex obscene, they have also in the process made it clear that Victorian apprehensions were not without foundation, however unfortunate the hysterical attitudes they encouraged. The fact is that psychoanalysis has emphasized the importance of the sexual instincts to such an extent that it will seem more imperative than ever to spare no precautions to see that they are properly safeguarded. Parents, finding dirty picture postcards in the possession of a child, will conjure up before their eyes horrible clinical cases from Krafft-Ebing and proceed to scream for the police.

At present enlightened sexologists are inclined to rely upon proper sex education to guard against the dangers of pornography to children. In physiology courses in advanced schools, they are shown charts of the human body which omit no organs. The mystery of

the origin of life is explained to them as their curiosity is aroused. Nudity is no longer taught as shameful, and when boys or girls use dirty words they are no longer regarded as perverts beyond redemption. The difficulty, however, with this form of instruction is that it is given under much too ideal circumstances to be a real preparation for the realities of life as it is bound to be for a long time to come. After all, the observation of pets and flowers leaves the minds of children hardly satisfied and many matters very vague. They never really begin to understand sex until the secondary education of the schoolroom is exchanged for the higher education of the street.

We shall come to a full realization of this with the advent of the new Victorianism. The rigorous and high-minded souls who are its leaders will have little sympathy with the lack of seriousness which the pursuit of sensuality implies. They will speak of

"pornography" uniformly preferring that word for "obscenity." They will be rebuilding society, and when they find that there are great obstacles in their way, they will lose patience. Placing their hopes in the next generation, their first reaction will be a general campaign against all vice. In its course the adult smut which panders to the "low" sexual instincts will come in for some very strange treatment. We shall witness the first of the apocalyptic events which will mark the various stages of the history of the sex censorship: Broadway revues and London music halls will be raided by the police!

Indeed, the attitude which will underlie this action may already be observed under Bolshevism. The Soviet censorship, although it is under the conditions of revolution primarily political, has nevertheless not neglected to ban the works of Hall Caine and Marie Corelli! It is easy to understand the hostility of

Communism towards the obscenity of established sin in terms of its hostility towards characteristic "capitalistic" vices. But all shibboleths apart it is better understood as part of the almost religious solemnity which must underlie any extensive efforts at the reconstruction of society. The attempt not only to make sexual morals free but to disassociate them also from the twentieth century lasciviousness which past standards have made inevitable must necessarily result in the disfavour of pornography.

Needless to say, however, the new Victorians will no more succeed in their heroic efforts at extirpation than the old Victorians. They, too, will discover that pornography has too great an appeal for human nature. Despite the alleviation of economic conditions and the encouragement of early marriage through such an institution as the companionate, pornographic "classics" and leg shows will be found to have a

vogue still. But not until the family finally disappears will a compromise be adopted which even now one may find frequently urged among Utopians. The infantile premise of the sex censorship will be abolished. Normal adults will be allowed to enjoy as much erotic art as they wish. It will only be made a crime to sell or give pornography in any form to a minor just as at present it is forbidden to sell or give liquor or cigarettes to minors, although the articles are generally freely available to adults. This arrangement will remain unchanged until the discovery is made that the alert juniors in the State Children's Nurseries have been surreptitiously securing pornography from adult sources and developing unfortunate complexes as the result of the sudden doses. But psychological science will have advanced sufficiently by this time for the expedient to be adopted of having trained sexologists to innoculate children against pornography by sys-

tematic exposure under controlled conditions just as at present they are innoculated against diphtheria.

As far as adults are concerned the Great State will go far beyond mere freedom. It will recognize that pornography may accomplish positive good for adults in the sublimation of the disorders of sex. As private enterprise will by that time have doubtless disappeared the State itself will have to supply the pornography. For reasons purely of convenience, this may not be made available in the public libraries. The State will establish and regulate literary brothels as it now regulates real ones. They will doubtless be known as eroticoniums. Dramatic brothels, however, if established at all, will be much more stringently supervised as the performers would be of real flesh and blood and red light districts might be too easily encouraged. But generally speaking, the revival of some form of the saturnalia by way of art is

not an impossible contingency of the future.

There will still remain the problem of sub-normal adults who have not as yet been eliminated through eugenic regulations. Their I.Q.'s will show them to be hardly above the intelligence of children, and it will be recognized that they are entitled to some degree of protection. Even perfectly normal individuals in times of personal stress may be psychically injured by pornography. The solution found in these cases, however, will not be to condemn the rest of society, as at present, by banning the offending work from circulation. The crime of pornography will ultimately be individualized. It will not be sufficient for it to be shown that an accused work had a tendency to harm those subjected to its influence, but it will also have to be proven that it actually caused injury to specified persons of either sex who will have to be produced before the examining board,

wringing their hands and bitterly bewailing the states of their neuroses. When the crime is established beyond a reasonable doubt, the punishment will be to fine the author of the work but no order of prohibition will be issued against the work itself.

It is the probability of these developments which make it idle to consider, except as far as the immediate future is concerned, the schemes now often urged which have to do with refining the concept of obscenity as by enacting that a book shall not be convicted upon a single passage. It is true that the necessity for deciding when a work really is pornographic will not have been abolished entirely. But in part the problem will have been solved by avoiding it: the prohibition of specific themes and the ultimate limitation of protection to minors and neurotics may be interpreted as having been to some extent thus inspired. It is clear that under these circumstances the problem

of definition will be much less acute. Moreover, the dangers of abuse under any general concept will also be decreased as a result of the greater freedom of sex life and hence the greater rarity of neurotic individuals. Nevertheless, although the liberty of the individual will no longer seriously be imperilled in subjection to an indeterminate crime, the ability to judge pornography will still occupy the State in the work of administration: for instance, when should certain themes be prohibited, when should eroticoniums be temporarily closed, when should a work of art entitle a neurotic to complain?

The State will naturally rely upon "experts." But there can be little doubt that the "good" censors of whom mankind has dreamed will not be the critics of art. At most they may discharge the function of censorship during a short period of transition, but they will soon be discovered to be unsatisfactory. This will be the case despite

the fact that in the future the craftsmen of the various arts may belong to organized guilds which will have correctional powers over their members. It is true that they will be experts in the sense that they have been licensed to practise their arts, but no more than at present will they understand the subconscious processes under the influence of which they work. It may be that the canons of æsthetics will come to be exactly understood and rigidly fixed, but if ever this comes about it will be the work of the psychologists of the future.

It can be expected then that the State will turn to the science of psychology. The "good" censor will be the psychiatrist, who generally will have replaced the judge in all problems of criminology. Indeed, criminal courts will have disappeared and their functions will be discharged by psychiatric clinics. The psychiatrist will judge the possibly vicious effects of a work of art,

not under legal definitions in which he will not be at all interested but in terms of pathological mental states and mental processes. His norm will be the completely psychoanalysed individual, and it is only a work of art capable of disturbing such a subject which he will condemn. He will have the use of elaborate psychological apparatus for testing mental states by gland secretions, respiration, blood pressure and other aspects of metabolism. Already the laboratory of the experimental psychologist is as elaborately equipped as the biologist's and physicist's. But such instruments as the sphygmomanometer and the pneumograph are but the rudimentary intimations of the marvels of the future. Doubtless we shall be able to measure permissible degrees of sex stimulation to a volt.

When at this stage of society, a work of art is held to have been inflicted upon a susceptible individual, the matter will be handled with firm decision. There

will be neither clenching of fists nor shaking of heads. The general sentiment will be that it was a great pity that such cases occurred. Nobody will be heard to demand that Shakespeare and the Bible be suppressed. Undoubtedly by this time Shakespeare and the Bible will have been forgotten. It is obvious that these will be tidings, indeed, of "last days." An apocalyptic scene may be imagined: an unfortunate is discovered who, when shown a work of art, exhibits a strange excitement and begins to cry, "Obscene! Obscene!" A look of consternation clouds the faces of spectators. The keys of pocket wireless click, and a swift ambulance rushes the shocked creature to the nearest psychiatric clinic. . . .

V.—MECHANISM AND CENSORSHIP

THUS far a factor has been neglected which is best considered apart from the history of the sex censorship, since it has played a part under all forms of censorship, and is destined to play an even greater one under any other forms which may appear before the millennial conditions which have been described are reached. The relation of mechanism to censorship has hardly been more than hinted. A great deal has been written about the paradoxes of the machine which have manifested themselves in the degradation of social and economic life. But the relation of the machine to the freedom of human expression has either been ignored or assumed to be beneficial, as when we speak glowingly of the freedom of the press.

MECHANISM AND CENSORSHIP

To the mechanization of the means of human expression it is customary to ascribe a great part of the progress of democratic institutions. The truth is, however, that with increasing mechanization freedom has suffered more and more. When invented the printing press was probably rightly regarded as an instrument of the devil, but the fear did not last for long. The fact that censorship gradually lost its ferocity, and its forms changed from previous to subsequent censorship, and are now undergoing immaterialization may be set down in great part to a gradual comprehension of the laws of the machine on the part of authority. Thus far man has kept somewhat out of the reach of its tyranny, but the present signs are that it is now conquering and undermining the freedom it has created. It may yet be said: The machine has given, the machine has taken away. If it leads to freedom, it will be a highly peculiar, not to say perverted, form.

The machine sets in motion certain inevitable tendencies. The primary laws of the machine are the laws of capital and organization. As long as the machine remains comparatively simple the effect is to expand the possibilities of human personality and human expression. Man with a simple hand press is unbelievably more powerful than when he had only the pen. Revolutionists have hidden hand presses in cellars, have disguised them as innocent desks and tables, and at times have shaken the foundations of established order. But after all they require funds to secure, and when secured they are not so easy to hide as a consequence of their size. When the printing machine is large and complicated, it becomes entirely beyond the individual's reach. A great amount of capital is necessary, and capital tends to be conservative subject to such limitations as the profits of revolt. Capital quickly tends to become its own censor for it

at once means business and organization, and the individual becomes subject to even greater control. Business also means competition and an appeal to the State to protect the products of the machine, and when the State has once intervened it remains to supervise. The climax of self-censorship has been reached in the huge concentrations of capital represented by the modern newspaper with its great plants of rotating and whirring machines. This is, perhaps, the economic interpretation of the "freedom of the press."

The arts have been more wayward, and temperament and individuality have counted for more. But the greater severity of stage censorship has not been unrelated to the absence of the machine. Although the finest product of the printing press—the book—has had the advantage of the principle of "the freedom of the Press," it has been subjected to censorship more than the newspaper. It happens that most

books are novels, and the importance of the theme of sex in the attraction of readers has made it difficult for publishers to subject themselves to sex censorship. Moreover, it is still possible to produce books without tremendous outlays of capital, and make a profit on comparatively small sales. Where the conditions of monopoly have existed, however, self-censorship has resulted : This is part of the significance of the subterranean censorship of the English circulating libraries in Victorian times which allowed Mudie to become the arbiter of public taste. Now, the conditions of modern publishing are rapidly tending in the same direction. The example of a great many other competing forms of distraction are dictating quantity production and distribution, and all over the world the Book Clubs have arisen to supply co-operative literature. The capital investment which they represent and the monopolistic conditions under which

they operate will drive them inevitably to yield to the law of the machine. Only recently the New York Book-of-the-Month Club has voluntarily censored Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front,* and to secure their profits the publishers have instigated the Port of New York Customs authorities to exclude the unexpurgated English edition! One has only to consider the great part which co-operative consumption of commodities will play in the future to realize the ease with which control will be managed.

The printing press has, however, always left some room for liberty. But the cinema which has produced the latest of man's art forms has proven even easier to control. It is not only that the conditions of film production have made for even greater concentrations of capital, and greater centralization of censorship. Psychological perversions which have resulted from the high degree of mechanization in film

art have rather played the dominant part. A previous censorship of films has been readily accepted even in Anglo-Saxon countries; the licensing of films has been tolerated where the licensing of printing would be regarded as mad and unthinkable. The matter is regarded very lightly by persons who would exhibit an almost apopleptic vehemence over the censorship of the most negligible magazine article. There are simply laughs and chuckles when the boards of censorship forbid the sight of a woman sewing a layette. The very term "movie" expresses contempt, but it is not to be explained simply by the immaturity of most examples. What we are dealing with are the deadly effects of automatonism in art. The psychological process involved really amounts to a complicated animism which has both points of resemblance and dissimilarity from more primitive forms. The printing press still seems simply another "mechanical

arm " of man which he uses to write as he does a pen. But the cinema projects a life that seems to have a force and vitality of its own. Man, the creator, is in the background, and it is the " magic shadow-shapes that come and go " that occupy the whole foreground. It is they who are endowed with thought and emotion and the ability to move and act. If the police were to raid a screen, the audience might instinctively rise and protest, but such untoward events cannot happen in the nature of things.

Actually, of course, the spectator knows that automatons are involved, but when he hears of censorship he relates the act not to man but to the same automatons. Yet, after all, he realizes that it is only a few feet of film that have been cut. The dignity of man seems not so explicitly at stake. It is not the same thing as hauling an actor off the stage. The principles of freedom do not apply to the puppets

who since they have no blood can have no blood shed for them. It is said that we are dealing with a toy, and that those who enjoy toys must necessarily be treated like children. It is said that we are dealing with an industry, not an art, and an industry cannot expect the high privileges of art. The products of an industry require the previous affixing of labels which will insure their free passage. This makes film censorship a process of certification rather than review, and it has thus encountered little real opposition from the very beginning: the American movie industry as a climax now has its self-imposed "czar."

The talkie has not changed matters much. The figures on the screen have been endowed with speech, and appear very much more alive. Psychological attitudes toward them have not changed essentially, nor the economic factors involved, and censorship has been continued, although with a little more

protest, due in part to the greater technical difficulties involved in censoring a sound film, and in part to a realization on the part of the public of the educational and political uses to which a talking film may be put. But the talking film means still more extensive mechanization and the only conclusion that may be correctly drawn is that it is so much the worse for liberty. The great film industries can hardly be expected to encourage harangues from radicals. It can safely be predicted that the sound news reels will not be given over to the revolutionary declamations of the Soviet People's Central Executive Committee on public occasions.

The radio has meantime extended the power of man's speech as the printing press has extended the power of his written words. Here the very nature of the communicating mechanism has at once necessitated the intervention of the State. Printing presses can run

everywhere without government supervision, but the radio at once requires regulation of wireless stations to remove conflicts for the dominance of the air. There is no formal radio censorship, but it is hardly necessary where the State is so firmly established. The history of the operation of police power shows the ease with which the power to license is converted into the power to control. If postal authorities under the guise of preventing the transmission of "improper" matter through the mails have established the letter-carrier as censor, the Air Boards of the future will no less firmly establish the radio-announcer as censor. The radio as a mechanism has removed contact between speaker and audience, and when only ghostly voices float across the ether, the eternal vigilance which is supposed to be the price of liberty becomes more difficult than ever. A speaker can be censored without himself or the audience being aware of the fact. On the receiving

ends there will simply be a strange static while on the transmitting end the speaker will go on blissfully declaiming his theme in complete ignorance that the mere turn of a lever has made him silent. One can imagine that the immaterialization of censorship is not far off.

The radio is destined to become the greatest influence in the transmission of art and thought. Already it had begun to be a substitute for the newspaper. It may also replace the lecture platform, the stage, the book and the motion picture palaces. Thus far, the radio has been a non-pictorial talkie, but when radio television is perfected, as it undoubtedly will be one of these days, mechanization will triumph again. Radio television will bring the talkie, the movie, the story, the news, sport, the dance into the home. Homo sapiens will sit in his cave like an insect with antennæ. A great part of the distinction between public and private

performances will have been destroyed, and there will no longer be both public and private amusements. The very term audience may disappear from language. Already the play or concert or speech which is broadcast may be said to be more private than public, since the numbers of those actually present may be said to be negligible compared to the listening millions.

It might be supposed at first that this individualization of enjoyment might relieve the pressure for censorship. For instance, to take a case now still familiar to us there could be no " indecent exposure " where there really was no public exhibition. But the fact is that " indecent " books have never been allowed to circulate although enjoyed in the seclusion of the library. The State will fear the reaction of the individual more than ever when he can receive appeals apart from his fellows. A mob may be easier to incite but it is easier to control, since its constituency

can be determined, and its moves can be watched. At any rate, the conditions of communication will have made censorship so simple that the State will hardly be able to resist the temptation.

There is only one possibly favourable effect of this process of mechanization. If the arts in which mechanization plays the greatest part are the ones which lend themselves most easily to censorship, they are also the ones which from the point of view of authority need most to be censored since they invariably turn out to be the most popular arts. The result is to shift attention to them almost exclusively. After all, the censorship of literature is almost negligible when compared to the continuous censorship of the motion picture. The ultimate tendency of mechanization to produce almost exclusively popular arts may be the emancipation of the older forms. The difficulty is that at present they appeal to the masses as well as to

the intelligent few. The novel is not only cerebral (one often thinks it is cerebral meningitis) but amorous, and the drama is vulgar as well as noble. The invention of the movie, however, has meant the appearance of an art appealing almost entirely to the masses, and it had more to do with the decline of Victorianism than is generally supposed. The masses relied on the movies rather than on love stories, and the novel profited by the achievement of a much greater freedom. The invention of the talkie may finally be discovered to have had the same effect of freeing the stage. With television accomplished, nobody but the intelligentsia would read either a book or attend a play, look at a picture in an art gallery, or enter a concert hall. There would exist a group of aristocratic arts which would not need to be controlled. Unfortunately, however, the effects of this might not be very wholesome for the arts concerned, and might deepen an

already noticeable trend toward æsthetic perversion, which would ultimately destroy them altogether. The machine would only have triumphed in another way.

VI.—THE CERTAINTY OF CENSORSHIP

At the very opening of these speculations it was implied that if there is any primary lesson to be derived from the history of censorship it is its constancy. Indeed, an incorrigible optimism is involved in any contrary assumption. Censorship has often been asserted to be futile. Perhaps that very fact has encouraged human beings to practise it. It cannot be denied, however, that if censorship has not hindered, it has certainly delayed the march of truth and the chances of progress. All that we may expect is that the major object of censorship shall no longer be the perpetuation of vicious institutions but rather the improvement of the human race.

This fundamental difference of purpose has been assumed in tracing the changes in the sex censorship. Their character, however, does not make it inconsistent to continue to speak of censorship after their inauguration. They presuppose a censorship as applied science. But while there is about such arrangements an appearance of cold rationality, there is certainly no illusion of freedom. Nor is there any inconsistency in assuming that the sex censorship will be reduced to a very minor importance, and yet that other form of censorship will become established. The element of continuity always lies in the technique of censorship which is carried over from one form to another until it begins to be modified itself by the demands of a new age: it is the fascination of means that they are often able to serve the most diverse ends.

Censorship is always the accompaniment of perfectionism, and perfectionism is bound to flourish in the

Great Society much more luxuriously than in the great days of Calvinism. A perfectionism based upon critical social and economic necessities is sure to be more unrelenting than one based upon theological dogma. This makes it impossible to doubt that censorship will exist in the Great Society even as it has flourished under democracy. The former must be regarded, indeed, as only a more developed form of the latter. The sociological leaders of the Great Society will fundamentally believe in censorship. One has an inkling of what their attitude will be from the relish with which modern sociologists discuss "social control." The social scientists will have noble and regenerative purposes in view and a corresponding impatience with obstruction and delay. Only a society which has no real intention of inaugurating the benefits of freedom can afford to debate it. Only a society that has no intelligence and knowledge about the ends to be pursued

to achieve the common good can afford to risk it. In such circumstances liberty is bound to be regarded as an accursed nuisance. What chance will mere philosophy or art have compared with the general welfare ?

It may be objected that the Great Society will be permeated by an atmosphere of science, and censorial activity will be felt to be incompatible with its free spirit of inquiry. It is undoubtedly true that the theory of science is experimental and uncategorical. In practice, however, science, it has been observed, has made for the most startling uniformity. It is true that nobody is burned for being scientifically wrong. Something much worse happens ! One is laughed at. And we live after all only in the Middle Ages of science. The reign of knowledge must make invariably for a more stringent control. At present the stupidity of censors prevents them from suppressing a great many works which they can hardly be

expected to understand. The sociologist, however, will know exactly what they are all about and understand them only too well. Present lovers of liberty will say, " God save us ! "

The State has been the great bugaboo of individualism. The good libertarian shudders when the State is mentioned, and crosses himself in mock alarm. But our hopes and fears should not befuddle us. The rôle of the State is bound to expand immeasurably and Statism has always been favourable to censorship. Old-fashioned political theorists dream of the time when, as the saying goes, the State will have " abolished itself," but that time may not come this side of the millennium. We may hope that the bureaucrats will be " good " bureaucrats, but not that we shall be able to do without them. All that may be said to be uncertain is the form of the State but that matters comparatively little. It will affect at most the organization of censorship, but then not very much.

Political monism is the recognized ideal for the State at present. But it is to be doubted if under a political pluralism the State will surrender the general function of the censorship of ideas. The State will act through the group only in matters that may be called administrative. The general means of communication and expression will be controlled by the State, and the effect of mechanization will evidently be much more marked than under individual control.

The path whereby the exaltation of the State is secured is also immaterial. It may be accomplished by a gradual amelioration of capitalism, or a cataclysmic communism, or a quiet revolution started by the united sociologists of the world. In any event the State will be socialistic in the fundamental sense of the term, and the chances of liberty in the future may be guessed from the anxieties of reforming liberals who have wanted to embrace

socialism but have hesitated before the prospects of art in the communistic State. Indeed, it has made them grow sick and faint at heart. It is, however, no longer necessary to rely upon surmises. The Soviet censorship resulting from the monopolistic control of the means of production by the State has proved absolute. It has banned not only Hall Caine and Marie Corelli, but *The Saturday Evening Post*, and legend has it that Einstein was suppressed on the ground that his theories tended to undermine faith in materialism.

To translate future censorships into terms of formula will be more and more difficult. There may be an end to formulæ. Already social organization may be said to be too complex to be held within a single mould. A corresponding particularity must characterize the censorship of art when views of life cease to be less and less simple. Indeed the indications are that the censorship of action will become increasingly more

important than the censorship of ideas. The greater emphasis placed upon the control of action is already apparent in the increasingly tremendous scope of modern legislation, which more and more controls every province of individual life. Humanity may sigh for the golden days of old when the State interfered only with the freedom of thought.

Yet, although there may not be clear and explicit formulæ there will undoubtedly be primary tendencies. Ever since political democracy has been accomplished, the economic equality of men has been the absorbing problem, and the citizen's views on property may become as crucial as his views on sex have been. Indeed, the acquisitive instinct is not much less strong than the sexual instinct, and no less capable of becoming the basis of a new religion as in the Soviet censorship. At any rate, the dominant interests of the next centuries may not be unlike that of the

end of the Middle Ages: as political theory was the subject of all books then, political and economic theory may almost exclusively occupy the attention of the best minds of the centuries of the New Transition. We shall have to be concerned so much with the great problems of social and economic readjustment that all but the plastic arts may sink into comparative insignificance again, as was the case in the Middle Ages when only painting and architecture survived. The novel and the drama, unlike the plastic arts, are not essential to man's life, and whatever may be true of the more popular arts which can be employed widely for propagandist purposes, they may decline, perhaps, for very lack of censorship! Or it may be that they will adapt themselves to new demands and we shall have stories and plays in which the real heroes and heroines will be the embodied principles of political economy. Mr H. G. Wells may turn out to

be not only the novelist who wrote so much about the future, but the novelist of the future. The dramatists, of course, will all be Shaws.

Censorship will have concerned itself with political, religious, sexual and economic regularity. Let it be assumed that the social scheme has been satisfactorily ordered. Is it possible to follow further along the stream of tendency? We may say that we do not need to if the realization of social order means the end of struggle and aspiration. But there will still be the competition for power, and the rivalry of man with man. The interest of the future will be precisely the one which at present is so vehemently denied in the economic interpretation of history: it always discounts the psychological motive in favour of the economic motive. But this distortion of truth will no longer be necessary when the economic man is satisfied. An intense interest in psychological science will be

manifested, and it will then begin to make its greatest progress. The mind of man will still be far from emancipated from all the tyrannies of habit and instinct and emotion and the dark phobias and complexes of the subconscious. Society will have become decent long before the individuals who compose it have achieved the same happy state. This must necessarily be so if society is ever to be really saved.

The last censorship will be a psychological censorship which will last for countless thousands of years. The perfection of the mind of man will be the ruling passion of the governors of society. Not only the man, woman or child who cries " Obscene ! " will be hurried away to the psychiatric clinic. Disease generally will have replaced the concept of crime. It is then that the very word censorship will have disappeared from the language of humanity, and police officials will be known as " Psychological Comptrollers." Nevertheless, if

any Methuselah survives from earlier centuries he will know that it is censorship after all. The formulæ will be the extraordinary complicated and subtle ones of psychological science. But the Psychological Comptrollers will have betrayed themselves by dividing mankind into classes who will require special protection from contagion and special treatment. The classes will not be determined by economic, social or political considerations, but they will be classes none the less for the fact that they are mental divisions based upon quotients of intelligence. We can have a dim conception of the way the different classes will be treated if we take our modern faith in education and revise this faith in terms of exact science. The mental Ariels may be free, but certainly not the mental Calibans. If there are robots who are all but men, there will be special arts for them.

Will there ever be an end of censorship? Perhaps. Let us imagine the

time when the conditions of life are so much in harmony with the needs of men that they invariably choose only the good. The minds of men are serene, and free from every base desire. Earth has become a heaven. Men are angels. Alas, one of the legends of humanity is that of Paradise Lost. Will one day a Lucifer arise? Will there be a revolt of the angels?

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