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tion, sleep, and the great interpretive disciplines of religion and philosophy. It is important to be rigorously honest about religion, he says. Far too many people have shrunk from being honest in their attitude toward it. "The call of religion may change little from age to age, but the expression of religion is less meaningful unless it is responsive to our own experience." The tragedy of religion-seeking man is that the fossil forms of religion are so sedulously cultivated. "Of all the great expressions of the mind and heart of man religion alone is not permitted its free growth." Dr. MacIver looks forward to the arising of a new religion which "will be in accord with the expansion of experience and of knowledge. Its Spirit will not be tribal, but universal. . . . It will enshrine no dogmas. It will have its exponents but not its authorities. It will find its mysteries within the known, not within the contentless unknown we usually invoke when we call on the name of God. . . . It will be a religion of understanding. It will cultivate the quiet, adventurous joys that lie in the contemplation of the style of the universe, searching out the heights and depths that everywhere within it may be found. . . . It will be free to grow. It will enlarge the conception of divinity, immanent in the allness to which we humbly belong."

Thus does Dr. MacIver, out of the wisdom and erudition of his years as a writer, scientist, and philosopher, in chapters filled with arresting new concepts and felicitous words and phrases that linger in the memory, portray the old but ever-new adventure of life. His book is deeply sensitive, tinglingly provocative, rich in background and information, religious in the highest, spiritual sense. It touches the reader's life with dignity. It is easy to read and to apply. It is a clear and quiet voice which will be heard above the senseless shoutings of the contemporary spiritual hucksters.



An Obtainable Utopia

"The Sane Society," by Erich Fromm (Rinehart. 363 pp. \$5), is a leading psychoanalyst's analysis of and prescription for the maladies of our generation. Bonaro W. Overstreet, who reviews it below, is the author of "Understanding Fear" and other books.

By Bonaro W. Overstreet

ON THE first page of Erich Fromm's "The Sane Society" you encounter the challenge that you have to carry with you to the final page: "Nothing is more common than the idea that we, the people living in the Western world of the twentieth century, are eminently sane . . . and as far as individual mental disturbances are concerned we look at them as strictly individual incidents. . . .

"Can we be so sure that we are not deceiving ourselves? . . .

"Let us, in good psychiatric fashion, look at the facts. . . ."

As much later in hours and days as it takes you to absorb the author's thesis, and to let it have its way with your mind, you close the book on these words: "We are in reach of achieving a state of humanity which corresponds to the vision of our great teachers; yet we are in danger of the destruction of all civilization, or of robotization. A small tribe was told thousands of years ago: 'I put before you life and death, blessing and curse—and you chose life.' That is our choice too."

Between that beginning and that ending lie some 360 pages that constitute, for this reader at least, less a book than a journey: an exacting, at times wearisome, but richly rewarding journey into a far country—a country where the commonly accepted looks suddenly strange and well-nigh incredible, and where the "fantastic" and "impossible" look both logical and attainable. It is quite a journey for the mind to take; and I warmly recommend it.

I don't believe I myself realized until I came to the very end of Fromm's book how long it had been since I had felt the exciting impact of a full-scale social vision. Ever since the First World War, it seemed to me, in sudden retrospect, the good will of the liberal community had chiefly spent itself on piecemeal improvements; or on pick-

ing up the pieces of broken lives, broken hopes, and broken promises; or on simply holding the line against disaster—or warning against dangers ahead. Or it had offered partial visions—as of a peaceful world brought about by some union of existing nations. But it seemed a long time since the liberal spirit had stood tall in firmness and faith to say to man, "This is what you can do; this is what you can be because you are man." Fromm, surprisingly, tries to provide the vision.

I say surprisingly because the vision catches the reader off guard. I myself had worked my way through more than two hundred pages before I began to feel what lay ahead: before I realized that what I was reading was not simply one more sound but relatively familiar analysis of man's nature as viewed by a top psychoanalyst, and one more study of what is wrong with our present values and practices.

THE early chapters provide, indeed, their own brand of excitement: Are We Sane? . . . Can a Society Be Sick? . . . Mental Health and Society. In these we find again—as in his "Man for Himself"—the tingling sense of human nature as beset by inner contradictions but as fulfilled in creativeness and love.

Then comes a long chapter—130 pages—on Man in Capitalistic Society; and I, for one, almost bogged down in it. Here again, as in "Man for Himself" and "Escape from Freedom," the thesis is that of the alienated human being: of man converted into commodity. One can accept the thesis and still, I believe, find this chapter interminable and irritating: irritating because the author himself sounds, at times, irritable, and prone to mix the convincingly important with the unconvincing and unimportant. Nonetheless, there the chapter stands: essential to the book, and a challenge to all of us who assume that social and economic processes must be sane because they exist and have their own sort of efficiency.

Beyond this chapter, however, the author climbs to the hill of vision; and I am profoundly grateful for having been permitted to climb in his company. I came out on top a little breathless. I could not see in detail all that he saw in the landscape below. But what a view!



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Max Kade Foundation
New York

Saturday

AUDIO FAIR



SECTION

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By Irving Kolodin

WHAT IS PROSPERITY DOING TO OUR POLITICAL PARTIES?

By Eric F. Goldman

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