



The Editor will be glad—space permitting—to publish in these columns brief letters commenting upon any article or subject that has appeared in THE FORUM.

The Kellogg Treaty

At the time this goes to press (late December) it appears that the Kellogg-Briand treaty outlawing war as an instrument of national policy may be approved by the Senate without further obstruction. The Editor of The Forum is, and has been from the start, a strong advocate of the ratification of this treaty because he believes that its importance in mobilizing public opinion for peace cannot be overestimated. The Editor regrets that limitations of time make it impossible to publish an able reply to Mr. Frank H. Simonds' arguments in the January issue, though one was written by Mr. John Foster Dulles of New York.

The following letter in answer to Mr. Simonds is from the Socialist candidate for President in 1928.

To the Editor:

Mr. Frank Simonds' article is interesting and provocative. My first reaction to it is that no harm and possibly some good might come from the type of additional reservation to our signature to the Kellogg Treaty which Mr. Simonds wants the Senate to impose. At the same time I doubt if the danger of foreign misunderstanding at this particular point is as great as he fears.

On the other hand, if anything, he understates the psychological effect, both at home and abroad, of the Senate's refusal at this late date to ratify the treaty initiated by our Secretary of State. I am therefore an earnest advocate of ratification of the treaty.

But even more earnestly have I been insisting, for reasons stated by Mr. Simonds and for other reasons, that the treaty, practically, will do very little to avert war unless promptly backed up by a considerable variety of treaties and arrangements. There is a great danger that the Kellogg Pact will be remembered as one of mankind's principal monuments to hypocrisy. Certainly this will be true if, as the price of its ratification, the United States should follow President Coolidge's advice to enter a new race in naval armament with Great Britain. The price of

peace is no mere incantation or pious resolution. And I am inclined to think it the outstanding tragedy of the last political campaign that the efforts which the Socialist Party and I personally made to compel the old party candidates seriously to discuss a programme of international relations leading to peace came to almost nothing. Candidates can dodge these great issues; the Hoover Administration cannot. It is still possible that by indirect pressure intelligent American opinion can force upon the Administration and Congress a more adequate programme for peace than either of the old parties has yet discussed.

But this you may think is wandering from Mr. Simonds' article. I repeat that I am inclined to favor his programme of ratifying the treaty with what now seems to me a legitimate reservation. At any rate, I think the treaty should be ratified, not because in itself it will do much good, but because failure to ratify it at this stage will result in such misunderstandings in Europe and such large increase of fear and suspicion. I should not, however, willingly swap ratification of the treaty for a big navy bill. It is too big a price and an aroused public opinion can make it an unnecessary price.

NORMAN THOMAS

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Educational Standards

As always, Professor Babbitt stimulates thought to such an extent that commenting letters swell The Forum's mailbags. Although these three letters discussing "President Eliot and American Education" in the January issue are all that space permits now, we shall hope to present others in the March Rostrum.

To the Editor:

Professor Babbitt has a dramatic genius for being right in the wrong way. I think he is correct in what he says about Rousseau and utilitarianism, but he sees alternatives so sharply that one suspects that his thinking is in part determined by

the all or none principle which is said to govern emotional response. He also has a way of confusing logical analysis with his personal prejudice, so that while the reader is obliged to give assent to his main conclusion, he is likely to find himself holding a ticket to a destination which is Professor Babbitt's rather than his own.

On his main issue I think Professor Babbitt is correct. He has chosen, fairly or unfairly, to make President Eliot a symbol of this issue. But the time has come when thoughtful people must demand that there be some relation between education and a decent philosophy of living. Education in any healthy civilization does maintain standards of value. This should be done by the method of inquiry rather than dogma, but education must lead, not follow the mob, nor be content in return for popular favor to teach efficiency in any vulgar trick that will give men material success. It must not, moreover, become the victim of every fad of the day, nor be required to justify plebeian trampling down of the values of civilization, as it now seems to be doing.

I think that the present tendency in education is to do all these things and that its votaries feel they are saving their intellectual integrity if only they do this pedantically. They seem to devote their efforts to a pseudo-academic technique in the methods of instruction, all the while lending themselves to the rationalization of the dominance of plebeianism in the modern world. It must be said that as men to-day wish to do things better, someone must teach them how to do this, and I can see no escape from the task. But beyond this necessary horse work there is need of leadership which education has now failed to give. There is need of reflection on value and principle. It is not enough to teach vulgarians how to put anything over; the educator must be a philosopher. He is responsible for what men think should be put over.

In this I agree with Professor Babbitt. The corrective is philosophical humanism, but it seems to me that the author turns humanism into a dogmatism which is

contrary to its spirit. He seems to idealize the past rather than to seek wisdom from it; or rather, to make solutions once applicable to a leisurely and unworldly few the finalities for men living in a world whose material conditions he seems to ignore. I do not believe that any real humanist opposes spirit and matter in the way he tries to do, or would so shut off inquiry in the interest of dogmatic standards.

In the end, Professor Babbitt is a neo-scholastic. The early humanists whose conclusions he would make final were inquirers. Our universities should not yield to dogma either humanitarian or scholastic, but encourage inquiry. Such was the spirit of Socrates. I do not find this spirit in Professor Babbitt's article.

EVERETT DEAN MARTIN

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To the Editor:

Professor Babbitt will have all or nothing. His last statement is that between a religious-humanistic philosophy and a utilitarian-sentimental one there is no compromise or mediation, that by one or the other education must be entirely possessed. In the face of this alternative what is to be said for President Eliot?

President Eliot was certainly not ignorant of, or indifferent to, the claims of religion and humanism. He was, however, quite skeptical of the application of the formal educational process to the inculcation of such a philosophy. When he began his career, the old-fashioned prescribed curriculum, inherited from the renaissance, was in force. I do not think that Professor Babbitt will maintain that it was producing the religious-humanistic results which he himself values. Religion and humanism are matters of the inner life, of spiritual apprehension. They cannot be enforced from without by prescription and convention. The attitude which they imply must be self-developed. The elective system, as Mr. Eliot conceived it, undoubtedly was a crude form of *laissez-faire*. Mr. Babbitt is undoubtedly right in pointing out that its machinery provided inadequate guidance to the immature. Since President Eliot's day his successors have been busy with the problem of organization which he left unsolved. But it did introduce the principles of freedom, of responsibility, of self-development. It made a place for the idea that what the student learns of most importance is self-taught.

What then is the immediate and attainable result of the formal educational process? President Eliot thought it was to teach men to live together in a commonwealth. He had abandoned the puritan conception of theocracy for the liberal doctrine of democracy. As Professor Babbitt notes, he was much preoccupied with the problem of happiness. He knew as well as Professor Babbitt's French authority that happiness exists within ourselves, but he adhered to a somewhat

ancient belief, formerly known as the ethical paradox, that it is to be sought only outside ourselves in coöperation with others. Now this coöperation is properly a subject of education; its achievement is the basis for progress, in which Professor Babbitt does not believe; and not only this but in a world such as ours, it is the only alternative to destruction. Somewhere President Eliot lays down four objectives of education in a democracy, somewhat as follows: 1. A belief in freedom of speech. 2. Skepticism in regard to propaganda. 3. Trust in the guidance of experts. 4. A sense of dependence on, and obligation to, others. This sufficiently contradicts Professor Babbitt's assertion that "the crucial assumption of President Eliot appears to be that the material efficiency promoted by utilitarian effort will be used altruistically." Quite the contrary, it is the function of education to see that it is used altruistically — to apply exactly this safeguard of coöperation. And however remote these objectives may seem to be from the humanism of Mr. Babbitt, they are specifications of the conditions of survival which it is perhaps the primary business of civilization to secure.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

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To the Editor:

Again thanks must be given THE FORUM for presenting the ideas of Irving Babbitt to that portion of our population that believes in taking thought. His ideas — and one can say this of few of our critics — have appreciable size and weight. Probably no American who attempts to criticize culture has more mental muscle than Professor Babbitt. If he were the central figure in all the critical wars now being fought in America, it would be to everyone's benefit, and most of all his opponents would gain, for they would have to extend themselves and measure up to major issues.

Professor Babbitt should, for one example, stimulate more hard thinking among those who are following recent developments in psychology. The strongest challenge to his position comes from the Behaviorists, and how very strong it is does not usually appear because of the clumsiness of its expositors. One is indeed put to it to meet their assertions, denials, and proofs. Professor Babbitt bases his opposition on the "immediate date of consciousness," but this, it may be retorted, is no more than a deep emotional conviction that, though Behaviorism is almost correct, it is yet possible to cultivate one's capacity for effort in the direction of freedom. But precisely how? By what clearly defined and clearly detailed technic? Here Humanism, strong though it is as ethics and as a system of critical ideas, leaves us asking for more; it is not well supplemented by psychological theory and technic. But anti-toxins are usually discovered for toxins, and perhaps

somewhere the antidote for a purely mechanistic psychology is already being prepared. Gestalt psychology is not it, however.

GORHAM B. MUNSON

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Religion in Science

To the Editor:

I wonder if the god Professor Mather describes in the January FORUM is really the God of Science? I get the impression that he is a kind of Mosaic Jehovah masquerading in a laboratory apron. He is not the ancient Arabian storm god, for he no longer gets angry; he is not the god of Christianity, since he cannot show benevolence. He is merely the personification of justice; and the mystic has no use whatever for a just god. What he wants is a comforter.

The scientist, it seems to me, should not re-define, in a wholly different manner, words which have come to have a particular meaning through long usage. Such a term is "god." The word is a theological symbol of considerable definiteness. To define God as "Universal Energy" is to do away with the necessity of the word. As a matter of fact, the scientist knows nothing about an "Administration of the universe." As La Place told Napoleon, there is no need of such an hypothesis. It is, in truth, silly. Natural laws are inherent properties of the universe. It is a refuge of primitive minds to assume the necessity of putting behind the scenes an Administrator who is to be concerned with promulgating these laws. The Administrator must be a self-starter and self-governor. Why not let these properties remain where we see them exhibited; *i.e.*, in the universe of experience?

The latter part of Professor Mather's essay is unintelligible in terms of science. What does he mean by his mystical phrase "spiritual energy"? Is this what the psychologist calls "intelligence"? Or is he speaking of the theologian's "soul"? And what has either word to do with God? Of course the world is "governed by ideas." And the intelligence which works with ideas is a fundamental property of organisms, or at least of certain organisms, for we do not know where it begins. But there are methods of studying intelligence objectively; there are ways of finding out how we get ideas. Is it not better to make such investigations rather than to make mysterious assertions about spiritual values?

E. M. EAST

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