

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRADITION

JOHN STEINBECK in his recent editorial "Some Thoughts on Juvenile Delinquency" [SR May 28] has indeed given us something to think about. This "something," of which we have heard little amid constant insistence upon freedom and independence, is *responsibility*. It is the value of the sense of belonging which Steinbeck insists upon—the belonging to a family and to the idea of family. I think Steinbeck has put his finger on the basic difficulty which has caused the delinquency of a significant portion of young America. While I do not support Steinbeck's practical solution (to punish parents) and shall not argue my objections to what I consider an extreme punishment if applied as a blanket corrective, I agree that responsibility should be forced upon and illustrated for our youth.

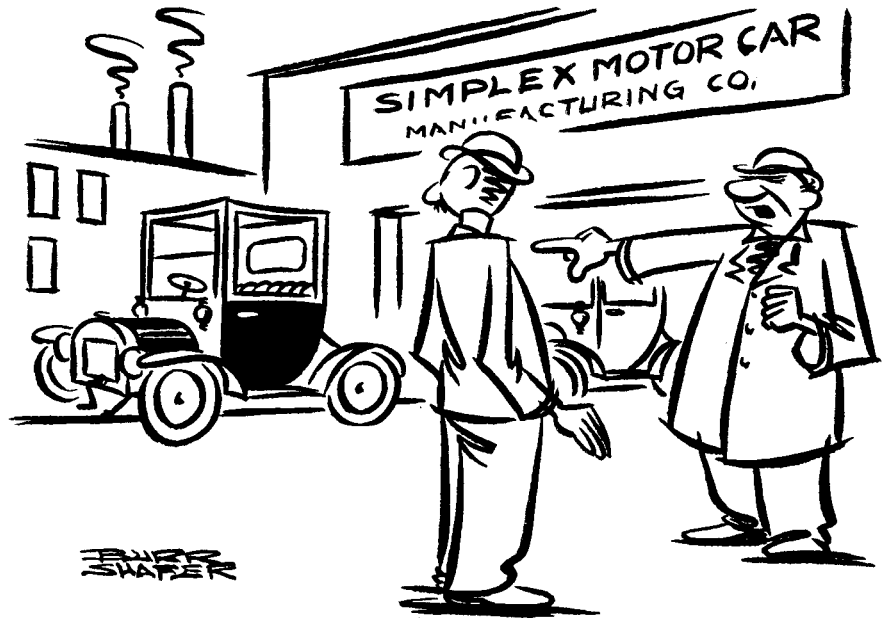
It seems to me that what we need is responsibility not only to family and to tradition which the family unit embodies but also to a whole tradition of legal, religious, social, and national heredity. A child is part of a great tradition, and it is our job as parents, teachers, townspeople, Americans, human beings to make our children aware of this tradition and their responsibility to it. We must explain through every medium of communication available that man has developed to the extent he has only through his willingness to share his ideas and abilities. We must make it clear to our youth that no man is alone, that no man can survive alone, that no man need ever be alone. We have the lesson of history and heritage to teach our youth and perhaps ourselves. To me it seems not impossible, not even terribly difficult, to teach our youth by all means at our command that *we* is as significant a word as *I*. By *we* I mean we the family, we the people of a religious belief, we the people of a town, a state, a nation, a world. It should not be impossible, that is, if we understand and believe this truth.

WILLIAM E. MORRIS.

Chapel Hill, N.C.

IMPARTIAL JUSTICE

IT IS NOT juvenile delinquency that is "a comparatively recent manifestation," as John Steinbeck states, but the thought of crime in children as separate from crime in adults that is new. The human race would scarcely have progressed as it has had family responsibility ever been so stringently held to as John Steinbeck suggests. If we are to assume the same responsibility for our children as we do for our possessions, then we must acknowledge that children are the last group for whom—in a democracy—slavery is condoned. One of the great tragedies of child life is that the child has no appeal against evil within his own home, the damage against him must already be



THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"Find out who's behind this vicious sabotage. Someone in the paint department has deliberately put two different colors on this motor car."

accomplished before solution or redress can be sought. Every original thinker, every pioneer, every man who has perceived a new way to satisfy human needs and problems has had of necessity to break through familial, social, and often legal strictures. Humanity has had a long history of boys who have early left homes intolerable to them. This freedom is more or less denied to American children, but with what have we replaced it? The child must now endure through adolescent years, nor has he any means of appeal, unless he commits an act of aggression which brings him to public and unfavorable attention. Let us set up a Court of Appeal for children, where they may bring their problems before and not after they are in trouble. Not a psychiatric bureau, which to the child mind means aberration, but one which represents the impartiality of justice.

EMILIE M. KUSSIN.

New York, N.Y.

PROVISION FOR PARENTS

EVIDENTLY JOHN STEINBECK is unaware that if a son cuts up theatre seats or robs a store his parents are legally liable for damages. Parents are civilly liable for the acts of their children, but are not liable for their criminal acts.

This distinction is important. In our Constitution the bill-of-attainder provision forbids enactment of any law punishing anyone for the misdeeds of a relative—and this includes sons, daughters, fathers, and other relatives. Because the old practice of punishing one for the misdeeds of his relatives was so grossly

abused, back in those days in England that Steinbeck eulogizes, the writers of our Constitution specifically sought to prevent such assessment of blame.

WILLIAM R. MATHEWS.

Tucson, Arizona.

INDECISION

LOUIS J. HALLE's "Our Uncertainty vs. Our Policy" [SR June 4] should have been entitled "Indecision, Why I Accept It." If our diplomats and scholars can come up with nothing better than he did we must accept our fate and settle for with no hope. Naturally, history leaves us with doubt as to the perfectibility of Man. On the other hand, it also gives us examples of people who had the answers (the kind Halle says are dangerous) and who succeeded in getting these answers across to the benefit of mankind. There were those dedicated people who decided to pledge their honor and fortunes to the establishment of an independent United States. The early Christians pursued a similar course, as did the Moslems. There are countless other examples. What Halle doesn't seem to realize is that many historical problems of human relationships have really been settled. Isn't that what progress is?

He says that we can never achieve salvation and be able to relax, secure in the knowledge that all is right. This is a truism. However, we can solve one problem and pass on to solving another. If we took Halle's advice we would not try to solve any problems at all.

DAVID G. SPRAGUE.

Seattle, Wash.



BROADWAY POSTSCRIPT

The Bard in Canada

STRATFORD, ONTARIO.

IT HARDLY needs affirming, but this year's festival is a badge of the strength of this three-year-old organization's production techniques. For this season Canada's Stratford has chosen to revive its "Oedipus Rex," to feature native talent in the key roles of "Julius Caesar," and to do "The Merchant of Venice" with an unheralded English actor in the part of Shylock. The result has been to shift the focus of interest away from individual performances or the exploration of less familiar plays to the skill with which these better-known works have been mounted.

"Oedipus Rex," which was impressive though not fully realized last summer when James Mason contributed a somewhat studied and brooding interpretation, is this season better staged and still features stunning masks and costumes and the very exciting portrayal of Jocasta by Eleanor Stuart. In the leading role Douglas Campbell experiments rather freely to give an original performance. However, it lacks the austerity and nobility we traditionally associate with Greek tragedy. The short and stocky Mr. Campbell bounces about swinging his shoulders as he becomes upset about details of the story. On one occasion he blubbers at a contretemps, and his argument with Creon seems more like politicians wrangling than princes clashing. When he describes the murder of Laius he resorts to the souped-up gymnastics of a revivalist preacher. This approach seems to impress and even move a large portion of the audience.

Mr. Campbell is not without interesting moments. At the point where Oedipus recognizes his doom Mr. Campbell moans twice and then allows the ensuing speech to ascend in tone as he gradually releases his shock into it. And sometimes he indicates a Freudian return to the womb by shifting from his customary baritone to a light tenor voice. Yet these devices are studied, too.

The dissatisfactions one feels with this company's "Julius Caesar" are partly inherent in the play itself. If it were a new script one would probably chide the author for having followed a suspenseful and stirring first two-thirds with a dull and sleepy final third. The better a company plays the first part the worse it makes the latter part by contrast. The Festival and

director Michael Langham have attempted to avoid this difficulty by emphasizing the effect of Caesar on the crowd and on Roman life in general. As a result the chaos after his death and the coming struggle for power between Lepidus, Octavius Caesar, and Mark Antony become the point of the play to a greater extent than do the personal tragedies of Brutus, Caesar, and Cassius.

It would be pleasant to report that this scheme works, but in this instance the performances keep reminding one that it doesn't. Julius Caesar as played by Robert Christie seems a ludicrously senile old man with no trace of greatness left. Cassius in the hands of Lloyd Bochner comes across as petulant rather than cynical. Douglas Campbell's Casca is amusing as he flips peanuts in the air and catches them in his mouth, but he is something less than ominous. Donald Davis's Mark Antony occasionally rises to the appropriate height for a man whose depth of passion is both his virtue and his failing, but far too much of the time he reduces himself to being nothing more than a crafty opportunist. And Lorne Greene pieces out a Brutus who appears to be operating less out of idealism and honor than out of stolidity and lack of imagination. The nicest acting is Donald Harron's brilliantly cold Octavius Caesar. And the most distinguished directorial touch is the play's end, which leaves Octavius and Antony eying each other as if in anticipation of "Antony and Cleopatra."

THE drawbacks in performance of the first two shows happily fade in the benign glow of the third production, "The Merchant of Venice." Here director Tyrone Guthrie has really made this play back into a comedy that is all of a piece. By acknowledging the physical love between Bassanio and Antonio (who is, after all, the title character) Mr. Guthrie lends the play a logical base. Antonio is established as a man ready to make any sacrifice for the good of the boy he loves. And the final scene, usually so anticlimactic, becomes meaningful when Antonio swears to Portia that Bassanio will never more "break faith advisedly." Robert Goodier is physically right as Antonio, and Donald Harron catches the ambiguity of Bassanio's position beautifully.

The building up of Antonio and

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