



## Young Barbarians

By Granville Hicks

**I**N "Entry E" (Random House, \$3.50) Richard Frede has written about undergraduates at a college that is named Hayden but could be Yale. The college in Robert Gutwillig's "After Long Silence" (Little, Brown, \$4) is called Arden, but, though there is a little more in the way of camouflage, it has a notable resemblance to Cornell. In technique the novels are quite dissimilar, but they give the same impression of American undergraduate life in the Fifties.

"Entry E" is a tight little novel covering a period of four days, the weekend of the Princeton game. It is told scrupulously from the point of view of a single character, Ed Bogard, and it exists almost completely in its own present. That is, we know nothing about Bogard's background except that he comes from Cleveland and obviously from a well-to-do family. The one episode from his past that is given any attention is a love affair that began well and ended badly.

Having received a warning from the dean, Bogard plans to devote Saturday and Sunday to work, and he does work from time to time, but repeatedly the distractions of a weekend, especially a football weekend, prove too much for him. And on Saturday evening there is a major distraction, for a girl for whom Bogard feels that he has a vague, second-hand responsibility becomes involved in a drinking party in his entry. When Bogard realizes that six young men are quite serious in their announced intention of getting Diana-Sue drunk and having sexual relations with her, he intervenes, but, his own efforts failing, he cannot bring himself to call the campus police.

Bogard and friends get Diana-Sue out of the dormitory, sober her up, and start her towards home. (She is not the type to be filled with remorse.) But the others have talked, and there is trouble for all, including Bogard. In pronouncing sentence, which is tempered with mercy, the dean suggests that Bogard's difficulty all along the line is a lack of concern. Bogard can scarcely deny this, since he has sought to cultivate just this quality. ("You mustn't have emotions," he told himself; "nor must you commit or in-

volve yourself emotionally.") The dean goes on to propose a theory. All generations, he says, are essentially the same, but each generation gets tagged because of the qualities of a small but "influentially divergent" group within it. "You don't seem to have a single conviction to your name," he tells Bogard. "The Indifferent Generation," he offers as a tag. And Bogard replies "That . . . or maybe The IBM Generation."

**W**HATEVER the merits of the dean's theory, which seems also to be Frede's, "Entry E" is a pretty convincing study of a type not easy for me to understand, the young man without commitments. It is also a disturbing portrayal of college life. What disturbs me is not the drinking as such or the preoccupation with sex as such but the absence of any kind of intellectual interest or awareness. Reading between the lines, one can see that Bogard is perfectly literate, and the dean says that earlier he had been a reasonably good student, but much of the time he seems ostentatiously un-intellectual, and for the other undergraduates in the book the life of the mind seems not to exist. One wonders—not for the first time if one has ever been a teacher—whether we can afford to keep our educational system operating for the benefit of young people of this sort.

Mr. Gutwillig's novel is larger in scope and looser in structure than Mr. Frede's, and it is not so purely a novel of college life. The narrator is Tom Freeman, who is a junior at Arden in the spring of 1950, when the book begins. It starts with Tom's first glimpse of Chris Hunt, a throwback to the Lost Generation. A veteran, older than the other undergraduates, a man with a legendary past, Chris captures Tom's imagination: "What I wanted Chris to be, what I made him in my own mind was a sort of re-creation of the 1920s' American literary hero—the masculine, handsome figure who, cut off from the roots of his inheritance, wanders the world in the exile of his own sensibility, morally and emotionally deracinated."

The novel is about Chris's deep and, in the long run, destructive influence

on Tom Freeman. The story carries them beyond college into a fantastic but, alas, credible incident concerning a loyalty check. Running through it is the touching, foredoomed love affair between Tom and Lila. But the memorable scenes are those that take place at college. There is even more drinking than in "Entry E," and the sex life of the characters, if less brutal than that portrayed in Frede's book, is better organized. And we have as well a kind of Greenwich Village colony, complete with a Dixieland revival and marijuana.

Somewhat surprisingly, a novel was published last year, this one frankly about Cornell, in which there was a similar bohemian fringe: "Halfway Down the Stairs," by Charles Thompson. There was even a character—the name was Hugh Masters—who was quite a lot like Chris Hunt. (If Mr. Gutwillig or Mr. Thompson becomes famous, the relationship between the two books will be a nice problem for scholars.) Quite apart from this confirmatory evidence, I have no trouble in believing that the kind of college life Gutwillig describes is possible, and he does not claim that it is representative.

**G**UTWILLIG has taken more chances than Frede, and his novel is less completely under control. He tries to show how his characters came to be what they are, and he spreads the book over a number of years in order to reveal the consequences of Tom's admiration for Chris. A design of this sort digs traps for the beginning novelist, and Gutwillig now and then falls in, but the novel is a good try, though a less solid achievement than Frede's book.

Meditating on what Frede and Gutwillig imply with regard to the quality of contemporary college life, I have reread F. Scott Fitzgerald's "This Side of Paradise." I must report that the differences between Amory Blaine's set at Princeton, 1913-1917, and Ed Bogard's set at Hayden-Yale in 1953 or Tom Freeman's set at Arden-Cornell in 1950 are not so large as one might have thought. The chief difference is that Amory and one or two of his friends have brief spurts of intense intellectual interest, but they appear to be exceptional in the Princeton of their day. The drinking of Amory's set is less systematic, but one cannot forget that the glamorous Dick Humbird dies as a result of drunken driving. There has been a major change in the mores of sexual be-

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# Beyond the Walls of the Church

***"The World Is Learning Compassion," by Frank C. Laubach*** (Revell. 281 pp. \$3.50), offers a heartened view of man's spiritual progress on this seething planet. The author is one of the world's great missionaries, a man whose unique methods for promoting literacy have taught more than sixty million people to read. His book is the subject of an essay-review by Father Trevor Huddleston, who wrote "Naught for Your Comfort." Formerly head of the Anglican Mission Schools in Johannesburg, South Africa, Father Huddleston is now in charge of the Novice Training Program for the Community of the Resurrection in England.

By TREVOR HUDDLESTON, C.R.

**T**HE theme of Frank Laubach's new book can be summed up in his own words: "In every century the spirit of Jesus keeps exploding beyond the walls of the church. Forever and forever, Jesus is bigger than His church, which professes Him but never fully understands Him nor measures up to Him." In respect to compassion, He is still "towering o'er the wrecks of time." To justify such a statement theologically would need an altogether different kind of book from that now under review. It would depend, amongst many other things, on one's understanding of what "the Church" is. To justify such a statement sociologically is what in fact the author attempts. He is concerned to show the development of the spirit of compassion as it reveals itself in the manifold growth, during the past two or three centuries, of missionary activity in the social and educational sciences. But—much more than this—he is concerned to show how, in this twentieth century, compassion is reaching its full flowering in the emergence of The Rockefeller Foundation, the UN, the many children of the UN (FAO, WHO, UNESCO), and finally the implementation of the Declaration of Human Rights.

I am most anxious that great numbers of people in America should read large sections of "The World Is Learning Compassion"—and not only in America, but in the whole of our complacent Western world. We need desperately to be reminded of the hard facts of our present situation: to be told, until we are sickened of hearing it, that (to quote President P. M. S. Blackett of the British Association for the Advancement of Science) "the greatest hypocrisy of the rich is to preach the virtue of poverty to the

poor." We need to be shown that, whilst Asia has an average annual income per head of some £20, Europe enjoys a standard of living just ten times as high, and the United States spends half as much again of this total income on her defense program. Certainly the thunder of Christ's condemnations of the rich who do not care needs to be heard as thunder and not as a rather meek apology from some fashionable pulpit or churchwomen's service brigade. "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed" was a judgment (and a final one) not on those who held opposing ideologies, but upon him who, seeing Poverty on his own doorstep day after day, preferred to look after himself and his own brethren. The "Christian West" is not very likely to escape the same judgments if it stands serenely aloof from the poverty, the illiteracy, the hunger, the homelessness of African and Eastern people.

**D**R. LAUBACH'S book is full of useful information, condensed from reports or analyses which the ordinary man would never trouble to read. It is a vastly spread canvas which he attempts to cover; and it is not at all

surprising that those areas of the world where American aid in one form or another has been most swiftly and generously applied should receive the fullest treatment. I would dare to wager that very few Americans and practically no Europeans, other than the specialist, really know how much is being achieved in literacy, in the conquest of disease and preventive medicine, and in positive labors of agriculture. Moreover the book most eloquently pleads for greater generosity on the part of the privileged nations, not only because it is right that they should be generous, but also because it is sensible.

Yet—having said this—I am bound to add that I simply cannot agree with Dr. Laubach's main thesis. And, for this reason, the book constantly angers and at times infuriates me. I think it is far more than doubtful whether "the world is learning compassion"—even the compassion which is the fairest flower of humanism. And I am morally certain that such compassion as manifests itself in the works, the organizations, the programs, and the foundations listed in this book is just *not* the direct result of the Christian gospel: that, in fact, it is not Christian compassion at all (except accidentally), but something very far removed from it.

**W**E HAVE discovered," says Dr. Laubach, "that capitalism works when we have enough of the compassion of Jesus in it." Have we? At what point in history it will be possible to say that "capitalism works" I do not know. But I doubt it is now! If so, how comes it that within the incredibly short space of forty years a system which is the direct opposite of capitalism sweeps across the East and carries half the world's people with it? Because there was not enough Christian compassion in the old system? Well—it had had nineteen hundred years in which to incorporate or digest it! "The lifting of the economic conditions of the laboring people . . . has refuted Marxism. . . ." Has it? I wish that I could be certain of this.

In spite of the obvious sincerity, the burning zeal for justice, the real devotion to a cause which inspires this book, in spite, too, of the very great value of much of what is here written concerning the positive achievements of twentieth-century Western man in his search for humanity and humanitarian ideals, to a Christian I believe that this book is far more of a danger than a help. For it rests upon the hypothesis that Man—provided he has goodwill (and, somewhere behind him, plenty of cash)—can transform this Vale of Tears into another Eden.

