

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Suggestions for Safety

HENRY BRANDON's discussion of automobile accidents in his February 19 STATE OF AFFAIRS column takes too much blame off the drivers and puts too much on the manufacturers. Education of drivers is the most important consideration.

I would suggest traffic schools in every city of 10,000 and over. Those who get tickets should be required to attend and should pay for the privilege. Their payments should maintain the school.

As for parking tickets, those for taking up two spaces or putting a car in an unsafe position should warrant attending a class on courtesy at least.

What are we afraid of? That we'd be caught ourselves?

W. W. MATTSON.

Clearwater, Fla.

I FEEL THAT Henry Brandon missed the whole point of how the few safety improvements have come about. The only answer is legislation. Until all manufacturers are forced to make safer cars, they will not do so. There is no technological barrier to the needed improvements. . . .

Some people will not use seat belts, some will roll over in convertibles, run stop signs, and drive on the wrong side of the road. But there is no reason why those of us who wish to survive intact for a few more years should be denied the protection of safer cars.

DAVID A. GIBSON.

Hilton, N.Y.

THE AMERICAN CAR is built for people who don't like to drive. Americans don't like to drive. But they seem to like to get where they're going by using a car. The people who take a real interest in and derive enjoyment and satisfaction from driving a car own Porsches, Jaguars, MGs, and the like. One has to drive these cars.

As long as Americans want to expend as little energy and thought as possible when they drive, they're going to continue to get the kind of cars they're currently getting from Detroit. The others, who take pride in driving, will continue to buy the European cars with their effective suspension systems, excellent brakes, responsive steering, and adequate power.

The question is: how do you make people really care about how they drive? When they genuinely want better cars, American manufacturers will build them.

B. DRAKE STELLE.

Wallingford, Penn.

Nature as Parent

ERIC HOFFER, in his article "A Strategy for the War with Nature" [SR, Feb. 5], is wrong in his description of nature as an enemy of man. Somewhere I once read that man attains his highest development in regions where there are great extremes of climate, and somewhere else that man has the ability to withstand hardships: lack of food, water,



"Water boils down to nothing . . . snow boils down to nothing . . . ice boils down to nothing . . . everything boils down to nothing."

and sleep, not to mention heat, cold, noise, pain, etc., and that if he does not use this ability he loses it. Nature is not a cruel tyrant who must be defied and conquered but rather a stern parent who sometimes punishes the strong and destroys the weak. Evidence and illustration of this is simply too abundant to mention. The result is that man has made himself master of everything but himself; all of his failures are due to his own mistakes and not to the forces of nature.

RODMAN READE.

Palo Alto, Calif.

Wrong Party

HORACE SUTTON made a glaring error in his February 19 BOOKED FOR TRAVEL column. He said that Chester Arthur ran as a Democrat. This is not true. He ran on the Republican ticket.

LEWIS F. FERGUSON.

Elmira, N.Y.

Wrong Popper

PROFESSOR KARL R. POPPER would be interested to know that his book *The Open Society and Its Enemies* was written by Hans Popper as reported by Kenneth Rexroth in his CLASSICS REVISITED column on *Plato's Republic* [SR, Feb. 19].

JOHN LACHS,
Associate Professor of Philosophy,
College of William and Mary.
Williamsburg, Va.

Puzzle for the President

AS YOUR ARTICLE of January 22 stated, the White House Conference on International Cooperation Year ended with "complete transcripts and summaries of proceedings" being sent to the President's desk.

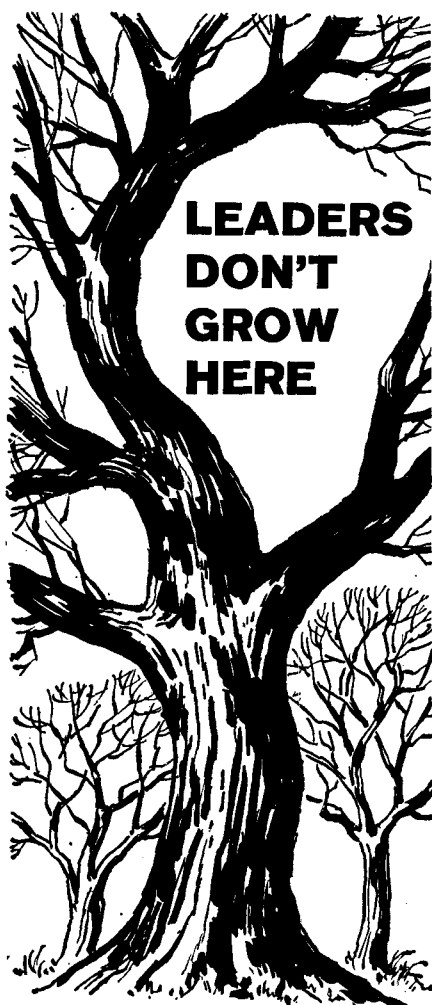
Placing this truckload of brilliant suggestions from 5,000 leading citizens on the desk of the President was roughly equivalent to dumping on it 5,000 scrambled pieces of a jigsaw puzzle in the midst of a deteriorating world crisis. The pieces are meaningless unless he finds a grand design.

What would happen if the President would now mobilize the American people to plan, develop, build, test, and demonstrate world-sized war safety control systems? This would not be done with a view to imposing them by force, but to give the people of the world a choice between annihilation and positive safety systems to prevent war.

The long-range goal would be a War Safety Control Authority under the political and legal control of a new world security organization, or a restructured and strengthened United Nations. This will require a continuing rising tide of creativity and invention in military, technological, legal, and economic matters, as well as in public opinion.

HOWARD G. KURTZ and
HARRIET B. KURTZ,
Co-Editors,
War Safety Control Report.

Chappaqua, N.Y.



Leaders are developed, not grown! And our colleges, through quality education, can develop them best.

Today America needs leaders in constantly increasing numbers—educated leaders, able to cope with problems of business, science, world affairs and everyday living.

Tomorrow's leaders will require even better education. Our colleges can give it to them, but only if they have enough professionally competent teachers, adequate classrooms, libraries and laboratories . . . in other words, only if they can provide quality education.

And quality education costs money. Colleges must pay what it takes to maintain a faculty of top grade educators and the facilities they need to do their best work. So for America's sake give to the college of your choice.

KEEP OUR LEADERS COMING!



Published as a public service in cooperation with The Advertising Council and the Council for Financial Aid to Education.



Tripping on the Light Fantastic

IN ASSESSING two new Tennessee Williams works, it is not enough simply to dismiss them as misbegotten failures. Rather, one is inclined to view the double bill grouped under the title *Slapstick Tragedy* as a manifestation of a rightly celebrated playwright's latest creative impulse.

The first of the two playlets, *The Mutilated*, appears to be a naked plea for compassion in the tough, degraded society of sailors and whores in 1937 New Orleans. In it the playwright counterpoints the true Christian spirit and a cruelly selfish materialism. The Christopher Flanders-Mrs. Goforth axis of *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* is here altered by making the compassionate Trinket Dugan the character with the wealth, and the tenacious Celeste Delacroix Griffin the character who is down and out.

Unfortunately, in the Broadway production the play emerges as a series of petty quarrels and a too shallow display of end results, as if the playwright had either become impatient with the task of exploring the deeper motives for his characters' actions, or had been restricted by the shortness of the one-act-play form. While there are recognizable flashes of Williams's unique talent, the play seems a mere dramatic exercise. Its exposition is thrust at us bluntly, and its brief events seem out of key with the formal Christmas Carol that bridges them.

The actresses, too, suffer from the play's abruptness, which allows little subtlety. As Celeste, Kate Reid pushes a blatantly realistic rather than a poetically moving vulgarity at us. And Margaret Leighton, who glowingly achieves the pathos of the breast-amputee, Trinket, has no chance to show us the gradual transition from resentment to compassion that constitutes the play's most important action.

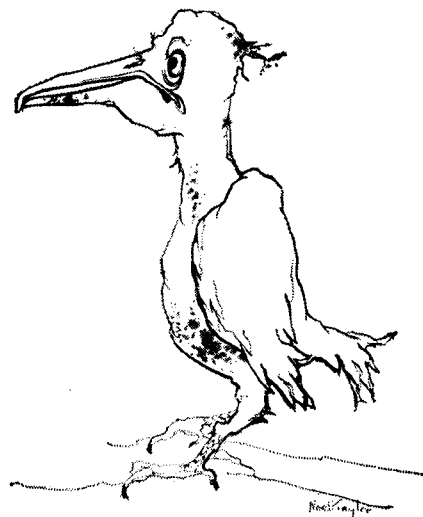
The second piece, *Gnadige Frau!ein*, is a more interesting piece of theater. In front of Ming Cho Lee's beautifully ramshackle setting of a Florida Key boarding house, euphemistically known as "the big dormitory," we meet several bizarre characters. There is Polly, the local society columnist, audaciously and magnificently performed by Zoe Caldwell. Miss Caldwell is a superb mixture of music hall, camp, and satirical dignity as she informs the audience, "I did the southernmost write-up of the southernmost gangbang, and called it 'multiple nuptials.'" There is Molly the ruthless boarding-house proprietress, "a

vulgar, slovenly bitch with social pretensions" played by Kate Reid in droll clownish style. And there is the down-on-her-luck ex-European vaudevillian and B-girl, portrayed by Margaret Leighton. Miss Leighton gives it a good try, but sprinting after discarded fish is not really her cup of tea. Finally there is the grotesque cocaloony bird, nicely acted by Art Ostrin in Noel Taylor's inspired costume that makes him resemble nothing so much as a gleefully vicious drama critic in witty pursuit of some presumptuous antagonist.

One is merrily entertained by much of the goings-on, and admires director Alan Schneider's searchings for style. Above all one appreciates Mr. Williams's originality of conception, particularly when it is occasionally graced with such penetrating Tennesseeisms as "The dark angel has a duplicate key to the big dormitory." However, as in the late Sean O'Casey's *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy*, the fantastic quality of the proceedings often appears too much of a theatrical stunt.

Nevertheless, of the two playlets, it is certainly the more effective. Since even with the best material Broadway is notoriously inhospitable to any bill of unrelated short plays, it would be silly to take the official failure of *Slapstick Tragedy*, which closed after only seven performances, as a sign of Mr. Williams's waning talent. Rather it is simply a mistake in judgment (much as was Edward Albee's *Malcolm*) and should not prejudice anyone about the potential quality of our most distinguished living playwright's future work.

—HENRY HEWES.



Designer Taylor's "cocaloony bird"