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This issue

Matters of life and death give this issue much of its substance.

François Leydet's "Planning for peace," which begins on page 29, boldly puts the case for channeling our national wealth into ends that enhance existence instead of threatening it.

Peter Engel's tour of the Marine Biological Laboratory (page 32) shows how keen scientific minds and high technology are gaining insight into physical and chemical processes that originate, sustain, and reinforce life at virtually every level of complexity.

George Howe Colt's report on suicide (page 47) contains a variety of perspectives on both death and life; much newly consolidated data; and a warning: despite the growth of "suicidology" as a field of study and action, we still lack the knowledge we need to mount adequate prevention programs.

Colt, who writes regularly for this magazine, has been investigating the subject of suicide for more than two years. The result is a lengthy article—very likely the longest we have ever published. We think it is also the most comprehensive, current, and compelling treatment of the subject yet presented in magazine format.

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Although thousands of professionals now specialize in various aspects of the problem, the U.S. suicide rate continues to rise. By George Howe Colt.

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Harvard's Society of Fellows, an institution designed to nurture "the rare and independent genius," enters its second half-century. By Mark Muro.

DISCOVERY

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A psychological parlor game from nineteenth-century France. By Marion Mainwaring. (*DISCOVERY is bound into subscribers' and donors' copies only.*)

POETRY

By Gibbons Ruark, Caroline Finkelstein, Charles Simic, and James Schevill. Pages 43, 80.

JOHN HARVARD'S JOURNAL

Class of '87 . . . New Center for American political studies . . . Illinois Jacquet: A lot of lovin' in front . . . The Undergraduate on leavetaking . . . Rhodes scholars' reunion . . . Winston Churchill at Harvard. Page 81.

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Cover photograph by Rick Stafford.

to leave an almost unsmoked cigar in one of them when the word came to move on to the ceremonial exercises. I remember hoping that someone would remove it before its odor permeated the house. I did not know that our two maids had agreed to cut in half and share whatever cigars our visitor left behind.

The exercises began at noon in Sanders Theatre. Mr. Churchill's speech was most impressive—partly because of the powerful force of his personality, against

"An historian who has written a glorious page of British history; a statesman and warrior whose tenacity and courage turned back the tide of tyranny in freedom's darkest hour."

—Harvard's honorary-degree citation for Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, Doctor of Laws.

the backdrop of his country so desperately at war, which was constantly in our minds. When it was over Mrs. Churchill and I were conducted back to the house. The men did not appear for some time. We learned later that the military units then training at Harvard had been drawn up in parade formation in the Tercentenary Theatre. The prime minister inspected them from the south steps of the Memorial Church; hence the delay.

After a short interval we were shunted to the courtyard of the Fogg Museum for luncheon. As hostess I had the honor and privilege of having the great man on my right. I shall never forget the pithy and characteristic responses—or more accurately, grunts and orations—elicited by my eager and rather timid conversational gambits. Here is a specimen:

Mrs. Conant: Young men in Great Britain have always gone all over the world because of the Empire. It will be good for young Americans to have to do that in the future.

Mr. Churchill [snappishly]: You are better off without an empire and with air bases. An empire means nothing but trouble. [Then, impishly]: But when Wendell Willkie talks about it, and Clare Luce, they get my hackles up!

He then added scrupulously, with full weight of implication: "But we have to



Winston Churchill, prime minister of Great Britain and man of the hour, leaving Sanders Theatre after receiving an honorary LL.D. on September 6, 1943. He is wearing Oxford's gown. Following him are David M. Little '18, secretary to the University (left), and President James Bryant Conant.

Harvardiana

A hostess remembers Mr. Churchill

by Grace Richards Conant

Forty years ago this September, Winston Churchill came to Harvard to receive an honorary doctorate of laws and to deliver an address. A special train from Washington brought him and Mrs. Churchill to an inconspicuous siding where they could disembark. Mr. Conant and I were waiting to meet them and to escort them to the small yellow house that was the

"official residence" of Harvard's president during wartime.

Mr. Churchill had been practicing his speech, which was typed in large letters and irregular lines, leaving blanks for pauses and emphasis. We assembled briefly in Mr. Conant's study, where I had taken the precaution of distributing a good many ashtrays. Mr. Churchill had

Churchill at Harvard

“Twice in my lifetime the long arm of destiny has reached across the ocean and involved the entire life and manhood of the United States in a deadly struggle. There was no use in saying: ‘We don’t want it, we won’t have it; our forebears left Europe to avoid those quarrels; we have founded a new world which has no contact with the old’—there was no use in that. The long arm reaches out remorselessly, and everyone’s existence, environment, and outlook undergoes a swift and irresistible change.

We have now reached a point in the journey where there can be no pause. We must go on; it must be world anarchy or world order.

Tyranny is our foe whatever trapping or disguise it wears. . . . We must forever be on our guard, ever mobilized, ever vigilant, always ready to spring at its throat.

The great Bismarck—for there were once great men in Germany—is said to have observed toward the close of his life that the most potent factor in human society at the end of the nineteenth century was the fact that the British and American peoples spoke the same language.

That was a pregnant thing.

Let us go forward in malice to none and with good will to all. Such plans offer far better prizes than taking away other people’s provinces or land, or grinding them down in exploitation. The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.

However the nations are grouped and ranged, whatever derogations are made from national sovereignty for the sake of the larger synthesis, nothing will work soundly or for long without the united effort of the British and American people. If we are together, nothing is impossible. If we are divided, all will fail. I therefore preach continually the doctrine of the fraternal association of our peoples . . . not for territorial aggrandizement or the vain pomp of earthly domination, but for the honor that comes to those who faithfully serve great causes.

How proud we ought to be, young and old, to live in this tremendous, thrilling, formative epoch in the human story, and how fortunate it was for the world that when these great trials came upon it, there was a generation that terror could not conquer and brutal violence could not enslave.”

—From Winston Churchill’s address at Harvard, September 6, 1943.

do our duty as it is given us in the circumstances in which we find ourselves.” The way he spoke the word “duty” was memorable. No false pride there. It was a man’s word and massive.

He emphasized how difficult it was for him, in his circumstances, to make a speech. The audience, after all, was immense: Americans, the British, their allies, “and the enemy.” Then he added,

“But it is very much easier when you are Number One.”

“I am glad there are some compensations,” said I. “There must be many burdens.”

“I greatly prefer it!” said Mr. Churchill firmly.

He returned somewhat later to the subject of speechmaking. “The speeches I have given that have got me into trouble

have always been prepared speeches,” he said. “When you speak without preparation you have a sense of your audience and speak in accordance with that, and it is very rare that you say anything out of the way. But when you have a manuscript, you go ahead with it. It is hard to change it. And sometimes it is not right.”

One guest asked him about his painting and said she had heard he had painted a portrait of President Roosevelt. “I haven’t painted since the war,” he answered hastily. “Painting is exhausting work! You have to have life in you to paint!”

At one point, apropos of nothing much, he began to recite—declaim, in fact—poetry that sounded like Sir Walter Scott. He seemed to take great satisfaction in the sound of his voice.

I told him how much my husband admired his life of Marlborough. “There is too much detail in it,” replied Mr. Churchill. “It is static. There should be more movement in it. It is longer than I meant it to be. I should like to do it over in one volume—take three months off to do it. The material is all there.”

I said I hoped he was planning to write after the war. I had already said the same thing about his painting. He rejoined quickly, “I imagine I could support myself for years by writing what I have seen.” Then he added, as he had about the painting, “But I don’t know what will become of me. I am within a few months of seventy years old. But I don’t feel any older than I did twenty-five years ago. Of course, I cannot exercise in the same way.”

“Do you feel that you are the same person that you were twenty-five years ago?” I asked.

“Exactly the same, except that I can do a great deal more work.”

Still thinking of the Marlborough biography, I reminded him of a passage stating that when the France of Louis XIV was beaten, a possible counterpoise to nineteenth-century Germany was destroyed, with everything that implied for Europe over the past two centuries.

“Oh, but we had to destroy Louis XIV,” came the riposte. “He was a terrible fellow—he oppressed and tortured.”

Then, with great zest and enthusiasm: “What a magnificent showman the

(continued on page 98)

Churchill at Harvard

(continued from page 94)

Almighty is! He offers us an immense spectacle, and it never comes out the same way twice!"

We went on to touch on a variety of subjects, according to my notes. I spoke with some interest and curiosity about the antique customs at Oxford—for instance, proctors standing on each side of a man when he drinks the loving cup. I heard myself declaring that such customs were delightful, "if you haven't anything more important to do."

Mr. Churchill looked at me fiercely and said, "There are a great many people in the world who have nothing to do!"

His speech in Sanders had referred to the importance of a common language as an underpinning of the British-American alliance, and the promise of Basic English as an international tongue. Mr. Churchill said he had told a press conference in Washington that he might speak on Basic. The news commentator Raymond Gram Swing had said, "That is most appropriate, as Harvard has done more work in Basic than any other university." Added Mr. Churchill, "So I said, 'Give me a note on that.' " Swing had done so, and the speech had pointedly acknowledged that "Harvard has done more than any other American university to promote the extension of Basic English." Mr. Churchill added, fairly enough, that the foundations of Basic had been laid by two Englishmen, I.A. Richards ("now of Harvard") and Charles Ogden.

"Not a line of the speech was written when I left the president at 10:30 last night," Mr. Churchill confided. "But at a quarter to three it was done."

As I think of that historic day, I am struck by the contrast with the present. There was virtually no visible "security"—the usual campus police, perhaps a few from the city of Cambridge, and half a dozen Secret Service men deployed around the perimeter of the Sanders Theatre stage. Nothing like the complex apparatus of protection that would be considered necessary today. The only infringement of human rights, as it happened, was the unexplained disappearance of a partially smoked cigar. (Comic

postscript: the cigar was retrieved by my housekeeper, who took it home to show some friends. Next day she looked for it in order to restore it to the two girls who had agreed to sequester it. She could not find it anywhere; when she queried her friends, they laughed.)

The special memory that stays with me is Mr. Churchill's return from his formal appearances. The conferral of the honorary degree had brought thunderous applause. His speech had been cheered to the rafters. Reviewing the cadets, he had twice made the "V for victory" sign, and ten thousand voices had acclaimed him. Afterward, cane in hand, he had stumped into the living room where Mrs. Churchill and I were sitting. And what he said then was, "How did I do, mother?"

Grace Conant is the widow of James Bryant Conant, president of Harvard from 1933 to 1953. She now lives in Newtown, Pennsylvania, and Hanover, New Hampshire.

Comment

The Game

On the West Coast, they have the Big Game—the Stanford-Cal (U.C. Berkeley) annual match. To heighten interest in this rivalry, Stanford ordered an 800 telephone number: 800-BEAT CAL. Unluckily for them, the order was taken by a Cal graduate, who immediately called the athletic department, which confirmed an order for 800-GO BEARS.

In anticipation of the fall season, I suggest that tickets for The Game be offered through 800-BEAT YLE, or another appropriate challenge.

MICHAEL V. DYETT '68, M.R.P. '72
San Francisco

Hairsplitting

"The College Pump" recently quoted a letter castigating the bulletin of the Harvard Club of New York City for referring to President Kennedy by his nickname. The use of a nickname for our chief executive is a hallowed privilege of citizens of the U.S.A. The affection often expressed . . . outweighs any consider-

ation of poor taste or lack of dignity. Was Dwight Eisenhower denigrated by the use of the familiar Ike? Or Theodore Roosevelt by Teddy? Or Andrew Jackson by Andy? The use of Abe for Abraham Lincoln was often an expression of deep love.

Billy Wiggin's terms "bordering on the offensive" and "a smearing of demotic impudence" are splitting a hair with a meat cleaver. After all, the caption writer was not composing a message to be chiseled in marble.

RAYMOND N. DOOLEY, A.M. '34
Green Valley, Ariz.

Good years for gates

Was "various classes between 1900 and 1902" (July-August, page 96; emphasis mine) Professor Hammond's *lapsus linguae* or Harvard Magazine's *lapsus typographicae*?

Quizzically,

BARBARA PHILLIPS CHRISTIAN '35
San Jose, Calif.

Editors' note: Neither *lapsus linguae* nor *lapsus typographicae* but *lapsus lectoris*. Various classes gave gates between 1900 and 1902: Class of 1857 Gate (1901); Class of 1870 Gate (1901); Class of 1874 Gate (1900); Class of 1875 Gate (1900); Class of 1876 Gate (1900); Class of 1877 Gate (1901); Class of 1880 Gate (1901); Class of 1886 Gate (1901); Class of 1889 Gate (1901); Class of 1890 Gate (1901). In 1900 the Class of 1873 gave a fence.

Solecism

A box on page 77 of the July-August issue is titled "The fifteen oldest alumni." Shame. There can be only one oldest. You mean the oldest fifteen.

MILTON NEAMAN '33
Mamaroneck, N.Y.

Editors' note: This was our *lapsus*.

The editors of Harvard Magazine welcome timely comment from readers. Space does not permit publication of all letters received, and those that do appear may have been edited. Write: Harvard Magazine, 7 Ware St., Cambridge 02138.