

Science in Politics

Continued from page 24

inclined, the new utopians take this question very seriously. If manipulating people is bad—and manipulation is one of the dirtiest words in the new lexicon—how can one justify the manipulation of people for good ends?

This is a problem still being seriously discussed. But there is a fallacy in all this twaddle. The theorists are assuming what they have to prove.

Where, then, it may be asked, should they have begun? They should have begun with the first step in scientific method, and that is to admit your complete ignorance of the problem you are to solve. The second step is to feel some real curiosity about what the answer will turn out to be. But the new utopians, to use Whyte's phrase, are twittering about ethics and democracy. Instead of discarding all these preconceptions, as a true scientist obviously must, they are still befogged by all they learned at college. They have not cleared their minds of cant. Faced with theories such as theirs, Roger Bacon exclaimed:

If I had my way I should burn all the books of Aristotle, for the study of them can only lead to a loss of time, produce error, and increase ignorance.

The quantity of books which are today increasing ignorance would come to an impressive total. It would be well, however, if ignorance were all that they produced. For the chief obstacle to progress is not ignorance but knowledge; and just such knowledge as medieval physicians had of medicine. They were all stuffed with information. They knew all there is to know about the habits of the unicorn and dragon. They knew the importance of the horoscope and they learned the peculiarities of the salamander. They had piles of books dealing with all aspects of medicine. But medical progress dates, in fact, from the moment when the physician stopped looking at the books and tried looking at the patient. In politics that is a moment we have not yet reached.

Suppose, however, that we gain the first step, and then the second; how do we proceed from there? First of all, we shall have realized that scientific progress is made step by step and one at a time, and that each step rests not on theory but on fact. We shall then grasp that the questions commonly propounded are at present insoluble. If asked what form of government is best, we can only reply that the question is meaningless. Best for whom and in what way and

where? But if the question were rephrased in more exact terms, we should have to admit that our researches have only just begun. Good government is that which governs well. Its effectiveness is measurable in terms of population, fertility, health, education, efficiency, economy, public spirit, and obedience to law. Its further effect is less certainly measurable in terms of learning, literature, drama, music, and art. Careful investigation of all that has been achieved might reveal, to begin with, some tentative grounds for thinking that there may be an optimum size for the political unit. It might perhaps be shown that states tend to stagnate when too small and become inefficient when too large.

If we are to progress beyond these elementary facts about, say, the size of the unit to be administered, we need to call in the anthropologist, the historian, the psychologist, the statistician, and the specialist in public health. With their help we might attempt a further set of problems. What should be the number, age, and sex of persons to whom authority is to be entrusted? How long should a meeting be allowed to last? What should be the rules of procedure? We need information of this kind before we can reach the conclusions upon which further progress can be based. We also need some careful investigation of what the mass of people want and need and of how (if at all) their views can be usefully expressed. In this way we might eventually reach the point at which the merits of monarchy and aristocracy, democracy and dictatorship could be compared. At present the means of comparison simply do not exist. —C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 871

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 871 will be found in the next issue.

CXHA B LBA PD
CNBFFHM EF PA
XPLDHOK XH LBQHD B
FNHWWR DLBOO
FBSQBTH.
—YZXA NEDQPA.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 870
"Yes, madam," said the college president, "we guarantee satisfaction or return the boy."

—HARVARD LAMPOON.

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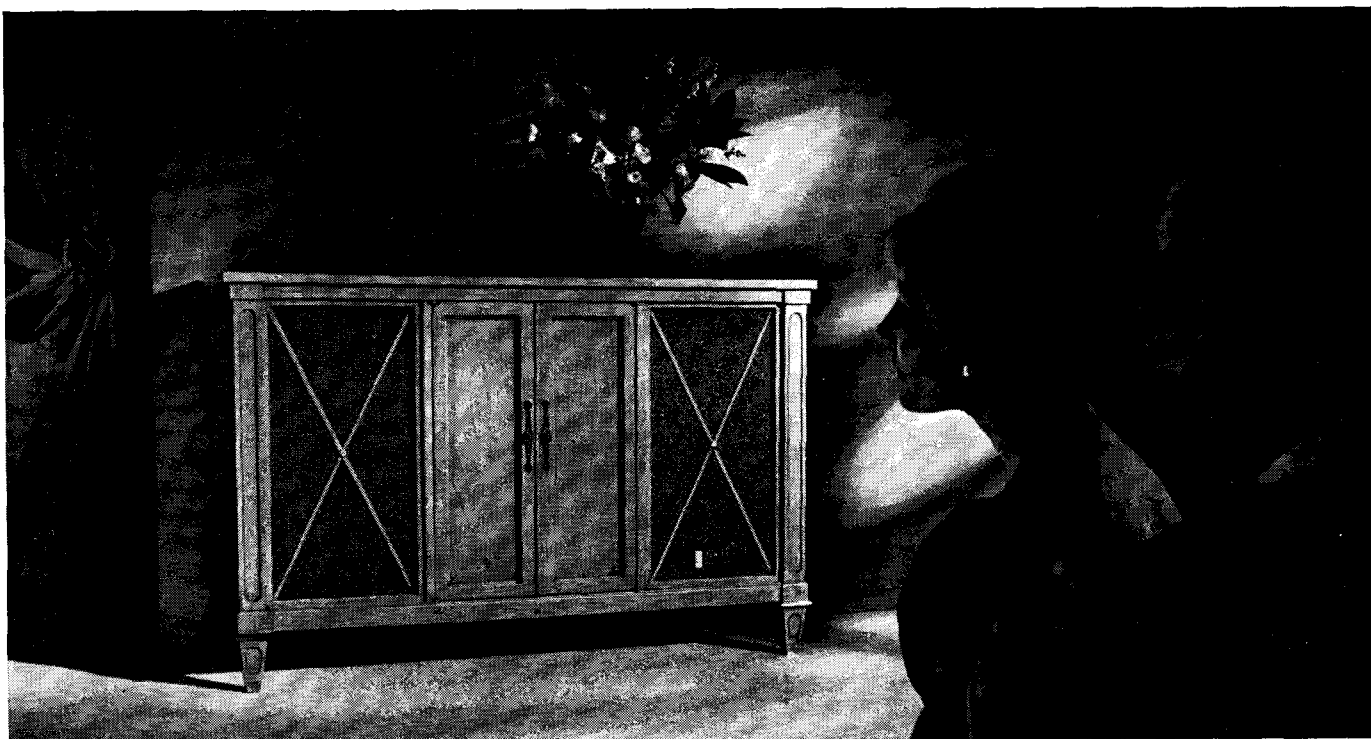
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Chopin, drawn from life, by Luigi Calamatta (1840)

SR/ RECORDINGS

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MONOLOGUE ON CHOPIN

By ARTUR RUBINSTEIN

(Overheard by Irving Kolodin)

Artur Rubinstein is now in Poland, where he is being heard in eight solo recitals as well as in orchestral appearances to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Frederic Chopin's birth (February 22, 1810). The following observations on the music of his great compatriot were made shortly before his departure as guest of the Chopin commemoration.



Rubinstein

YOU WANT to talk about Chopin? Gladly. It is remarkable to think that this man who wrote only piano music, and had such a superb sense of his limitations—no small thing in itself—has such an outpouring of affection on an anniversary. Take the Schumann year, 1956. Here was a man who wrote the greatest songs after Schubert, marvelous chamber music, four symphonies that are played all the time (and when they are rightly played by such a man as George Szell, who really has made a study of them, how well they can sound) and all his remarkable piano music. With all that, there wasn't nearly the appeal to the public that Chopin had on the hundredth anniversary of his death in 1949. Right here in New York, it was unbelievable: three Chopin recitals on the same day at the same time and all three completely sold out; Volodya Horowitz in Hunter College; I in the