

The World and the West

WHEN Alice got to the other side of the Looking-Glass she was able, you remember, to look at her own world from outside instead of from inside. That is what Professor Arnold Toynbee helps people of the Western world to do in his BBC Reith Lectures, *The World and the West*, now to be heard from National stations of the NZBS. "We temporary lords of creation," he wrote in a *Radio Times* introduction to the series, "are perhaps inclined to see the great non-Western majority of mankind as something sub-human: a herd of 'Natives' or 'Orientals' who are part of the fauna and flora over which God has given our Western Adam the



BBC photograph
ARNOLD TOYNBEE

dominion. But how do we Westerners appear in non-Western eyes? . . . In these lectures the West is presented, not as another name for all of the world that is of any importance, but as a disturbing intruder who, in recent times, has broken in upon the world and has turned its life upside down."

In his first lecture, to be heard from 1YC at 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 13, and later from other stations, Professor Toynbee considers Russia's historical background, particularly the Eastern Christendom and the western conquests of Russia which influenced and are still influencing her relations with the West. In his view the Russians have had the same reason for looking askance at the West that Westerners have for looking askance at Russia today. In succeeding talks Professor Toynbee speaks of the Islamic people's reactions to some aspects of western technology and nationalism; the tension between a native and an alien force in India; and the way in which Far Eastern peoples have reacted to aspects of Western civilisation in different ages. He then examines further several features which he believes to be characteristic not only of the contemporary world's encounters with the West but of all such collisions between one civilisation and another. The last talk looks at the world's encounter with the Greeks and Romans. This, says Professor Toynbee, is an effective cure for "this Western illusion of ours" that what we have done to the world within the past few centuries is something unprecedented.

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 9, 1953.

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