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October-December	 	MARY HICKISH

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Editorial

As winter draws in, the nights get longer and the days colder, and everyone wonders how many electricity cuts and gas leaks will disturb the peace that is the British household over Christmas. There is the thought of endless relatives and tedious Christmas cocktail parties. The newspapers will be giving startling coverage to the number of motor accidents over the holiday period, and the pros and cons of British Standard time. Yet despite all these major upsets, there will be crumpets over the fire on dark afternoons followed by bumper Variety Shows on television in the evening.

The sad thing is that by the time this Journal becomes printed and distributed the cyclone disaster in Pakistan will have been forgotten. All that will be remembered will be a number, the last estimation of the death toll as reported in a particular newspaper before it was given the page-eight-column-ten treatment, ousted by the sacking of Lord Hill from the Post Office. This is what modern communications is all about. Except for a few old chestnuts such as the Bomb and the Common Market which drag on for years, with seemingly no progress made, most items become history after a very short time has elapsed. The follow-up phenomenon, so important in Medicine, is almost unknown outside it, the pre-occupation with the present being all-important. Although for cleven days the moon Astronauts filled every news bulletin and dominated the newspapers, not very many people can even remember their names now. The Medal of Honour merely takes its place beside the photograph of College on Graduation day, and all is forgotten.

Another feature of Modern Society are the attacks on our sets of values, spotlighted recently by the Government who one week donated £200,000 to Pakistan, then a week later announced it was trying to raise over ten times as much to prevent a Velasquez painting from leaving Britain. Although no one can deny it would be a great pity to lose it, surely the price is so high that this is one occasion when the National Gallery must give way to American wealth and save its money for some other project.