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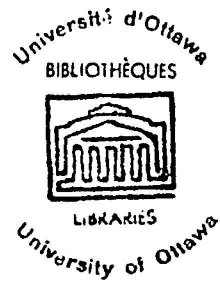
WILL DURANT

by

J.C.Curry



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To my Alma Mater

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

It will be observed that in this thesis the ideas of Will Durant are expressed to a large extent in his own words. We have expropriated his phrases and even purloined his sentences in order that he might speak out as far as possible in his own behalf. We regret that in this task of abridgment we have had to mercilessly dissect his perfect English and with our own inferior words span the gaps between the ideas we selected for reproduction. His most important declarations we have preserved in quotation marks but we must acknowledge that we owe him a still greater debt.

J. [illegible]. Curry

WILL DURANT

Gentlemen, may we present Will Durant,- not Will Durant in person but Will Durant the author, and not as Will Durant the philosopher or Will Durant the atheist, but as Will Durant the writer on morals, literature, history and economics. His philosophy may not be as deep as Aristotle's; his style may fall far short of Milton's or Addison's; he may lack the vocabulary of an Edmund Burke; he may not have the commanding personality of a Samuel Johnson; his criticisms may not live like Mathew Arnold's; his history may be inferior to the legacies of Macaulay and Carlyle; he may not be prolific as Saintsbury: in the realm of American prose he may not even be in the vanguard. He does not paint fascinating pictures with his pen. His humour is good but never prominent and he has no space for comedy. There is little first hand narration in his work and we find no satire. He may not even leave an important work for posterity to praise or condemn. He may not even be the most outstanding writer in English to-day, but he is an intellectual workman, a moulder of contemporary thought and literature, one whose influence baneful and beneficial, may long be felt after all traces of the workman and the mould have disappeared. Perhaps he is nothing but a prop used in the construction of the great edifice we call Literature, just one of the temporary things we dare not overlook. It is often interesting as well as wise to investigate the

stability of our supports, to determine the kind of material out of which they are made, to estimate how long they will last, and to calculate the service they are rendering.

By the careful valuation of each of the integral parts of any compound the accurate value of the whole is best obtained. Would it not be, therefore, at least of some profit to know all our writers ? To be able to compare the mediocre and the great and appreciate the collection in its entirety ? To see each in the light of the whole and in their true perspectives to separate the colourful from the drab ? Careful and complete examination is necessary if we are to properly appreciate the gifts of the masters and politely grade the contributions of those not so favoured by providence, and if the petty works of the lesser are the sine qua non of the products of the greater, let us do honour to all to whom honour is due. When we look at the vast ocean of literature we are too often inclined to forget that the great tributaries which constantly feed it are themselves nourished by little brooks, and, after all Dr. Durant is at least a small river.

With him life and literature are not greatly different. He is forever moralizing. He takes his subject matter from life itself and reproduces in his writings whatever of his thoughts he wishes others to share.

Equipped with an education inferior to that enjoyed by very few authors he is constantly searching for the things which make men better and life worth living. Unfortunately in spite of all his meditation his mind does not attain a belief in an immortal God, the Creator and End of all things. This omission appears all the more tragic when he writes:

> "I thrill yet at the mention of His name and hunger for the ideal life He wished mankind to live; if to love Him and to hear Him gladly is to be a Christian, then skeptic and pagan though I be, I am a Christian too and Christ is still my God."

It is most regrettable that his faith is not stronger, but here we must remain confined to literature, and taking Cardinal Newman for our authority we find:

> "Literature expresses, not objective truth, as it is called, but subjective; not things but thoughts."

Thus Durant's work has good claim to literature, but covering many branches of human activity as it does, we can only deal with it in proportion to our capabilities and must never forget our limitations. As this small endeavour is directed towards the literary field we must pass summarily over his philosophy, but in so much as an author's philosophy pervades his writing and determines his influence, and since this is particularly so with Durant, we obtain our license and our duty to treat of the influence of his philosophic (or unphilosophic ?) principles in his work.

It has been suggested that as a literary

figure he has no right to recognition and that as a philosopher he counts for nothing. His literary skill is too apparent to require defence and the non-effectiveness of his philosophy is too serious a problem to be overlooked. His philosophy may be wrong. How could any philosophy be right that did not contemplate a Creator ? But if it is wrong that is the very reason it can not be ignored. It must be treated briefly but adequately in its proper place.

And surely his claim to literary merit can not be assailed because his subject matter is philosophy ! Surely no one will contend that all the brilliant writers who have contributed to the development of our language must be excluded from the literary hall of fame unless they also wrote about English ! Must we include only critics and biographers and dreaming poets ? Was it a mistake to give Sir Thomas Malory a place in our literature because 'Le Morte D'Arthur' is historical ? Should Francis Bacon's contributions have been rejected as philosophy ? Are the diaries of Evelyn and Pepys to be excluded because they relate facts and not fiction ? Is Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' not literature ? Did Burke and Chatham fail to make literature because their subject matter was political ? Was Newman refused admission to the kingdom of letters because he was a theologian ? Let us refer the problem to other literatures and disolve the difficulty. If Greece

and Rome and France and Germany and other nations postulated the theory that a literary work must not carry men's minds beyond the subject of literature then we would hardly be justified in setting up our own literary meaning arbitrarily. It would be useless to classify as English literature works that would not be called literature if written in another language. But if Greece and Rome and others would have heralded these masters as literary men if they had been their sons, then we too must have the right to honour ourselves by exalting them in our realm of letters. That is the test. Are historians, philosophers, orators, theologians, etc., allowed to claim literary honours when they master other tongues than English ? Indeed they are ! Demosthenes and Cicero, Caesar and Froissart, Bossuet and Luther, engraved their names in the literature of the world. Yes indeed, English speaking nations have the right to acclaim their leaders who attack so valiantly the strongholds of ignorance and illiteracy. Americans with justice honour their comrades who fight the same fight on the same field against the same enemy. Ethics and economics are honourable weapons and it is to the credit of Dr. Durant that the object of his campaign is the betterment of humanity. Let us not court-martial him because he has entered the field armed. His lethal arrows may be dangerously warped but we shall never find him using poison gas.

The career of Durant has no doubt encountered many obstacles along its hazardous course. A declared agnostic in a nation that imprints on its coins "In God we trust," he must have found many doors closed to the wares he offers for sale. The seductive friendliness of his book 'Transition,' which he calls a sentimental autobiography, must have alienated the affection of many of his former friends. Just how much of it is autobiography is open to speculation as he has adopted the name John Lemaire. Yet there are many parts which his commentators and editors have substantiated and there are also many pages devoted to revealing the mind underneath the ideas. John Lemaire is the same precocious and learned master of English as his creator. Both have the same ideas, the same beliefs, the same impulses, the same problems, and the same opinions. They see life and death in the same perspective. They think alike, they talk alike, and they act alike. Even those of us who disagree with their outlook must admit they are both gentlemen.

This book is an account of the influences which acted upon his youthful mind and the results they affected while his etherial boyish spirit was gradually rationalized into mature manhood. We obtain his opinion on the result of modern science and research upon religion and a portrayal of the political experiments and disillusionments of our time as well as an illustration of

the futility and needlessness of Utopian aspirations. It is typical of the author that he should begin with the praise of an old friend. No one realizes more than he that friendships are one of the greatest joys of our existence. Searching his memory to his earliest recollection he is being bounced on the knee of a "rough but kindly Italian," whom he describes as a "handsome fellow," and supplements the compliment by adding "as almost every Italian is." He concludes that in his infancy this Italian taught him "the genial kindliness that lies in the hearts of men."

Shortly his philosophy commences to be revealed. He informs us that in the hilarious ceremonies of games and sports America expresses one element of its spontaneous religion. The other element, he says, is in the factory. After describing the lives of the factory workers he declares that even the farmers who saw these factories grow in their fields "knew the tragedy of transition." The factory workers were, however, a happy lot and "beyond these ruined farms they saw the promised land; and though they knew they had but seen its portals, they nursed the silent hope that their children would enter the kingdom." That is the philosophy of Durant: life is its own reward. A man's satisfaction is rooted in his children's success. "When I wish to renew my faith in progress," he says, "I consider the working and the power

of this instinct of parental aid; how it lifts the children on the shoulders of the parents, generation after generation, and raises life to higher levels of enterprise and thought." One of the most appealing aspects of the book is the public manifestation of his affection for his parents. He has dedicated it to "A tender mother and a perfect father." After a few pages he pays tribute again to his mother. "She is beautiful yet in her white-haired seventies." Then he praises his father by paying his respect to his brother; "perhaps more like his father than any of us, and I could yield him no finer compliment." His first chapter ends with a narrative of his first sin:- a lie. His brothers had gone swimming despite a maternal warning. In vain he gave an alibi for them.

In school he became fascinated by the life of Christ which he calls "the noblest story everx written." But Christ appealed to him as a hero rather than as a God. He was attracted to religion by "this poetic personality" and his piety gave great pride to his good mother. In the name of the Church Père Dubois took possession of him. Père Dubois has always remained one of the most admired men he has known. "There was none of whatever faith that did not admire and respect him as he passed." As a boy he was quite unruly and shortly after his transfer to the Catholic school he engaged in a bloody battle.

Then he devotes a chapter to falling in love with a school-mate whom he calls Irene because that was not

her name. This little girl has now, of course, grown up, and he thinks has become a nun. "Perhaps if I saw her now I should not recognize her - though I am sure that she is beautiful still."

Referring to another priest whom he loved, he calls his office "that high career for which his energy and his intellect had fitted him," and says he thrilled more at his praise than even at the smile of the girl he loved. This priest requested him to be a priest and once again he gave himself to God. He was prepared for a scholarship examination and won his way into a Jesuit college. At this time his appetite for reading greatly accelerated and its voracity could not be checked. Someone had said that Darwin had written the greatest book of the nineteenth century and he was unable to resist it. 'The Origin of Species' proved uninteresting but 'The Descent of Man' overpowered him. He read book after book in an attempt to conciliate evolution with his religion. Wallace seemed to him to believe in both Darwin and God, and St. Augustine appeared to have interpreted Genesis in evolutionary terms. In vain he tried to evade the agnosticism of Huxley and Spencer. He became more pious and prayed as he never did before, but Shelley, Swinburne and Fitzgerald left their imprint and Don Juan ruined his belief completely. He concluded every independent spirit of the nineteenth century had been an agnostic or an infidel.

With his faith torn away he strove in silence for a year to keep the sad fact from his family. Although he abhorred the hypocricy he felt it was a matter between himself and those whom he loved a little better than the truth. Finally he visited the office of Father Morley "the man whom of all men I loved next to my own father," and confessed his lack of faith. Father Morley was confident he would return again to God, and advised him to pray even though he did not believe, and his confessor would always absolve him as long as he wanted to believe in God again. Though he thought his prayers remained sincere still, they began to decrease in number. He was ripe for socialism.

He obtained employment for the summer. His employer was "as easy with me as his own safety would permit. He too must be in paradise now, poor fellow!"

Then he inserts: "The reader will be tired by this time of finding every man in this story a nobleman and every woman half a saint; he must not look for villains here because I have found none and I believe they are as rare in life as they will be in my book." This remark seems far too broad minded as he soon tells us that while working in a comb factory he figured out the operating costs and profits of the concern and concluded he was receiving one tenth his due. When he heard a street-orator proclaim Christ to have been a communist he acquired a

taste for economics and his quest for proof of the existence of God gave place to a search for the solution for poverty. When an English priest lectured against Socialism he tactlessly came to its defence and only through the benevolence of the university he obtained his B.A.

He started to work in a newspaper office but found it shocking. The nausea of crime sickened him and when Father Morley extended the invitation to return to college as a teacher he eagerly accepted the kind offer. There he developed a friendship with a student who shared his socialistic views and together they entered a seminary resolved to socialize christianity. While there he read Hale White's translation of Spinoza's 'Ethics' and he writes: "When I had finished it I knew that the Ethics would be one of the strongest influences in my life." Persuaded of the futility of his mission he reentered the world and Father Morley made him a teacher once more. He became convinced that when he surrendered his faith he was not one alone but one in millions. He thought the world to be undergoing the same change - that Copernicus started it, that Voltaire carried it on, and Darwin completed it.

Father Morley helped him to get a job as a substitute teacher in a Newark public school and then they parted. He undertook some night work in addition and this being too exacting he suffered the loss of his position. He took to public lecturing to eke out his living and was

invited to speak on 'The Origins of Religions.' For the honorarium of five dollars he felt the anathema of his Church.

An outcast of all his former society, he visited, hungry for companionship, the Freedom Association where he had delivered the sacriligeous address. He was persuaded to become a teacher in a libertine school and in the eyes of the world he became an anarchist. In his class he expected to see long whiskers, dischevelled hair, flowing ties, and unwashed necks, symbolic of unpaid debts. He says that instead he found philosophers and saints. For the most part hair was combed and only a few dischevelled heads bespoke the order of the minds and these were not the leaders. One of his first lectures was on 'Love and Marriage' and the discussion that followed was the customary onslaught that the profligate make on order. The lecturer answered radicalism with conservativism just as it was his custom to be radical with conservatives. The Libertine school got under way shortly and he taught while the children picknicked and played in the open, illustrating history with stories and mathematics with games. Punishments were barred and difficulties naturally followed but the experiment was a partial success for the first half year.

On one occasion he went with some anarchist friends to speak from a car on behalf of free speech. During a comrade's eloquent and passionate denunciation of the

ravages of the employers, fruit began to fly and the meeting came to an unscheduled end. To his already sad plight there was added the ordeal of being arrested. Taken to the police station and arraigned, he was released on bail.

When he was about to retire that night, one of his friends confided to him their plans to blow up the house of a certain rich man whom they held responsible for breaking up their meeting. Naturally he could not sleep and in the morning the argument began anew. Two others came bringing the bomb. During the ensuing controversy his room mate appeared to be backing out and one of the others began to expound the advantages of death. Suddenly he hurled the bomb to the floor. All were destroyed but the author, who, having been protected somewhat by the bed, was recovered from the smouldering ruins, naked, bloody and dirty.

Shortly afterwards a rich friend invited him to tour the world as his guest. He went to meet his friend in St. Petersburg (which Durant suggests may now be called Stalingrad), After visiting Moscow, Kiev, Sebastapool, Constantinople and Athens, he went to Italy which he says he has long upheld as the greatest of all the nations of Europe. Then he journeyed to England and muttered to himself, "This, at last, is civilization." He pauses in the narrative to say: "Here were order and quiet and cleanliness, good manners and self-control and a reassuring

leisureliness of motion and speech. These people would not stab me for differing from them in philosophy, they would not disfranchise me for loving books, or imprison me for passing through political schools and theories, ... they would provide a great park for the free and open explosion of my oratory." He visited Scotland and Ireland but did not kiss the blarney stone because he could gab enough. He was impressed by the fresh and natural beauty of the Irish girls and the flush of health and open life upon the checks of the young men. Then came Paris, far more brilliant and intellectual, where, he thought that life had reached a subtlety and sophistication that Athens and Alcibiades had never known, but sex seemed to run through all the fibres of this hurried existence.

When he sailed for New York he "already was beginning to feel something of that nostalgia which acts within us like the homing instinct of the bird, and draws us back mysteriously to our wonted haunts however far the migratory impulse may have led us into alien lands." The trip was long and his desire to be back increased with every hour. Then came back America with its radiant sun and he felt America had become the favoured child of the sun. Travel had broadened his perspective and he was able to view his country in the spectrum of the world. Like the light beyond the violet, he found its potencies little known and undeveloped and as he meditated on the future he felt like

the young soldier of 'Locksley Hall' a vision of hope and promise. He saw his country in the light of her youth and he concluded; "Soon we would catch up with Europe; some day we would go beyond it, and top its greatest glories." He adds; "I could love America a little more now that I had seen the world."

One can not read this account of his travels without admiring the spirit of good will which the author carried from Moscow to Paris. His eyes were open for what his brain would call good and whether it be found in Leningrad or London it received as much praise as he would have given it in New York. The account of his travel is the record of an unprejudiced mind of a rare degree in travellers, but most admirable of all is his patriotism. Many men have loved their country and many many Americans have sung the praises of the United States but most of them discredit their own judgment by believing the United States has accomplished in little over a century what mankind has failed to do since Adam. It is Durant who sees not just accomplishments but potencies and when he says "America will catch up with and surpass Europe," one can not but admire his fair mindedness.

Then he met his Ariel. She was the oldest of his pupils. Later she told him she had attended one of his first lectures and decided if that were her new teacher then she wanted to go to another school. As she came to his

nevertheless, he comments, "We can always trust the tongue to conceal the heart." They were married.

His rich friend Alden offered to pay for his expenses if he wished to continue his studying at Columbia and once again he was revelling in scientific research. While he studied there his Utopias moved farther back in the perspectives of the future. "I had thought of the world in Ethical terms and had talked of rights and wrongs; now I learned that behind rights and wrongs were desires and powers. I heard something of the impulses of mastery, and discovered that it existed just as strongly in the leaders of the Proletariat as in The Manufacturer's Association of America." He concluded that as long as a struggle continued, and as long as material goods remained the prime necessities of survival in the individual and the group, that instinct to possess would operate in the human soul; and that Utopias that reckoned without it were castles in the air.

Then, he thought, perhaps it would be science and not Socialism that would revolutionize the world. As he contemplated the value of the great scientists that taught at Columbia he began to think of the immense power scientists would wield if they ever united to give scientists alone control of the earth. Then one of the great physicists crossed the campus. Though famous as a great and subtle mind his appearance was not that of a

masterful man. The writer began to think "the scientist is not a warrior and not a ruler. Nature does not like to give two gifts to one man."

As an antagonist of foreign wars he developed a feverish interest in the American election of 1916. Naturally he spoke for Wilson and for this new heresy he was read out of the Socialist party.

Came the war. He always liked the Democrat chieftan and still believes it was the Russian débâcle that sent him into the fight. He shuns the idea that Wilson would send American boys to secure the loans of the bankers to European governments. He believed Wilson was wrong but had learned enough to know that he sometimes was the one who was not right. But the vicissitudes of war were most repulsive. War rent the university into factions pro and con in the faculty as well as the student body. The country saw sad partings everywhere: the battle fields saw twenty millions in the agonies of death. The Armistice came with celebrations. The author found one mother in tears. Her son was not coming back. He thought of a hundred thousand other mothers.

In 1919, still burning with the hatred of war and the hope of youth he enrolled in a crusade to form another political party to oppose the blood-thirsty Republicans and Democrats. It was a liberal party and the high-soaring youthful mind dreamed again of the new age

that might be ushered in. Four hundred met in convention at Chicago and various cure-alls such as free silver, single tax, governmental monopoly of banking, equal distribution of wealth, etc., were expounded. Cooperation and amalgamation with the Farmer-Labour party was vainly sought and the movement ended in nothingness. While returning home on the train the next day, as he sat privately dreaming about the events at the conference, he visualized a rather prosperous looking gentleman identify him as a speaker at the convention and introduce himself. This man had belonged to the Knights of Labour at one time but now was enjoying better days. The stranger reminded him that there had always been radicals but when radical parties succeed it is not because the people are becoming more radical but because the radicals are becoming more conservative like the Socialists in Germany and the Labourites in England. The number of reds is constant. The gentleman went on to point out that he was a Socialist once but like Socialists who succeed he is no longer a Socialist. Only when Socialists do not succeed do they continue to rant on about the sins of society, but once a man gets ahead he votes for the most conservative candidate in the field on the grounds that if another were elected he would lose money. The cream always rises to the top. It would be different if radicals did not marry but the family is a conservative institution. Parents become suspicious of

every movement to turn things inside out. They guard their savings as a priceless and precious guarantee of their children's security. Finally the stranger stopped the lecture and made the challenge, "What do you think ?" As might be expected the idealist began to paint a scientific future, a world without a working class, no slums, no poverty and no dirt. "There have been only two revolutions," he said, "the agricultural and the industrial. The third will be the scientific revolution."

Then he writes his chapter on 'Nadir.' When Durant sees black it is not just dark blue. He reveals that the conversation just ended was fanciful and the business man just another side of himself. His despair, cynicism and apathy fell to low depths. History seemed a kaleidoscope of stagnation and change only apparent. The strong always ruled the weak and inventions and discoveries were instruments of oppression. The discovery of means of contraception had resulted in the sterility of the intelligent and the multiple fertility of the unfortunate; it had nullified the work of education by destroying the social transmission of moral and intellectual culture. The governments were disgusting and without hope of improvement. Elections in which an ignorant electorate selected its party of corruption were senseless, extravagant formalities. Everywhere a few men with knowledge and ability led by the nose the majority who have none. Whether politics be

directed by an oligarchy of land-owners as in the Middle Ages, or an oligarchy of industrial and financial magnets as in the current world, or an oligarchy of trade unions as could conceivably come in the England of 1950; an aristocracy of some kind was inevitable. Everything about life was a futile struggle and in the end the victor was death. Death was man's destiny. His Atheism was no weapon against it. He felt vanquished. He tried to believe but could not. "What a consolation religion must be to all those who see death. I might have faced the matter more cheerfully had I not known in childhood that relieving hope; it had gone from me and nothing had taken its place; I was left empty and desolate."

In the lives of Ariel and him something was missing. They were not as happy as they should have been. Having participated in the birth-control movement and having heard a thousand times the tribulation that comes with children without being told of the joys they might bring, they were childless. Observing the inroads of industry in the life of women and how the great emancipation had worked to their great disadvantage, he began to question the wisdom of childlessness. It seemed apparent that a women does not prepare to remain a thing of beauty that would not be a joy forever. They consulted a physician and despite his cruel neglect Ethel was born.

So much for 'Transition:' it seems to be the

prescription for what not to read. Yet, what tragedy of Shakespeare can compare with it ? The dramatist only treated character, but Durant, although he has merely narrated a series of incidents, has touched the very foundations of character all along the way. This is not just a tragedy of a life but the tragedy of a soul - the drama of its struggle from its birth to its repudiation.

The author looks in awesome wonder at some aspects of life which command his admiration if not his understanding. He marvels at the sacrifice of the man to the woman, and of the parents to the child, and of man to the species. In the most uncivilized parts of the globe and in the lowest strata of society, one can see parents sacrificing themselves for the materialistic benefits of their prodigy and the species, but the process that attracts him is the progress "in raising life, generation after generation, to higher levels of enterprise and thought." His keen eyes peering through an opera-glass of materialism, are fascinated by the characters making their exits and their entrances to play their roles on the stage of life. It is an impressive spectacle: it is a noble play. Self-sacrifice for something more than material gain is transcendental in a Christian world. He is compelled to admire it though he does not seem to see that these players are not just acting. They are fulfilling their functions in life - not just the perpetuation of a

species, nor merely the improvement of descendants, but the process of perfecting themselves, of performing their duties, of fulfilling their purpose.

AS A MORALIST

We have been dealing with Durant's stream of thoughts as it journeyed from its Christian origin towards its destination. From the crystal spring it has travelled far and grown to be a river, and while it still contains much of its original self, it has been greatly swollen by the tributaries from the nineteenth century. Valiantly it has fought to cleanse itself from the debris which obstructs the progress of thought, but before we drink let us make an analytical test.

A teacher of philosophy in a mid-western American college, after describing his difficulty in interesting his students in profound volumes upon the science of sciences, declared:

> "And then came Durant's 'Story of Philosophy.' Here the thing had been done at last: here was an author who had adjusted himself to the American audience: here was a book that the average student would read. I assigned Durant."

This warm enthusiasm, however, was not shared by everyone. Devoting a chapter to Durant in his book 'The Misbehaviorists' Wickham wrote:

> "It is with regret that I include Will Durant among the misbehaviorists. He is no crude mechanist, and his popularity is so great that, like Sinclair Lewis, he has almost ceased to be a mere individual and become an institution. ... Durant's ability as a writer of biography amounts almost to genius. ... That Durant himself is not a philosopher, is evident - and in his favour. We really do not need another philosopher just now - of the sort we would be likely to get. He has no system of his own, no universal touch-stone, no central thesis giving unity to his several beliefs. In his mind Kant, Darwin and

> Bergson meet, but no more mingle than do oil and water. An emulsifying tertium quid is lacking. This lack should have made him an ideal historian of other men's theories. And it almost did."

Before reviewing this book which met with such contrary receptions, we might say that it is not a history of philosophy and, no doubt, was never intended to be such. It is the narrative of the lives of certain revolutionary philosophers who have fascinated their biographer.

He takes us first to Greece - a skeleton-like hand stretching its crooked fingers out into the Mediterranean Sea - and depicts old Socrates turning philosophy from physics to the mind of man, seeking wisdom above all things else, and dying for liberty. In Plato's 'Republic' he is trapping the Sophists into defining justice in terms of power and it is suggested that they are the models for Nietzche. The subject under discussion has changed to the 'Republic' and so he continues with Plato. Many things seem to have jumped from Plato to Durant. The 'Republic' complains that in simple matters - like shoe-making - we think only a specially trained person will serve our purpose, but in politics we presume that every one who knows how to get votes knows how to administer a city or a state. Plato tells us that ruin comes when the trader whose heart is lifted up by wealth, becomes ruler; or when the general uses his army to establish a military dictatorship. "Kings must be philosophers," says Plato, and Durant points out that this is the key-stone to the arch of Plato's thought.

We might note that this devotion to knowledge has permeated into all Durant's work so strongly that it has become the dominant element. It forms the crown of his 'Program for America' and 'Mansions of Philosophy' and characterises the author above all things else. However he does not subscribe to all Plato's remedies. Though he does affirm that example speaks so loud that precept goes unheard, he does not agree that the state should rear the children to avoid corruption by the parents. This appears more Christian but is probably derived by Durant from Confucius. Turning again to the synthetic state Plato prescribes that no man shall be eligible for office without specific training nor unless he has fulfilled a lower office well. It is interesting to see he listed overpopulation and trade as the two causes of wars. Durant, having related Plato's life and works, asks what can we say of it. Is it feasible ? Has it any practicable features and has it ever been realized even in part ? During the Middle Ages the population of Christendom could be classified into Laboratores (workers), bellatores (soldiers), and oratores (clergy). The last group controlled the instruments and opportunities of culture and ruled with almost illimitable sway over half of the most powerful continent on the globe, and like Plato's guardians they were placed in power not by the suffrage of the people but by their talent as shown in ecclesiastical studies and administration. It was an

aristocracy of no mean political sagacity; it built probably the most marvellous and powerful organization which the world has ever known. The Jesuits too, for a time, ruled Paraguay as a clerical oligarchy, and after the Revolution of 1917 the Communists ruled Russia sternly devoted to their cause and with the frugality of saints. These examples tend to show the plan is practical and, in fact, it was largely inspired by the example of Egypt compared with Athens. However the critics have been saying ever since that Plato underrated the force of custom in the institution of monogamy, and the moral code attached to that institution - the possessive jealousy in males and the maternal instinct in mothers - in supposing that they would allow their children to be taken from them and reared in heartless anonymity. Above all he is accused of destroying the greatest nurse of morals in destroying the family. In short, they say, he sawed off the branch on which he sat. Plato realized all this and exempted the majority from his plan which he proposed for the ruling class capable of this communism and self-denial. The real objection is that it lacks a sense of flux and change. From the democratic turbulence of Athens he has gone to the extreme to find order and has arranged man in classes like an entymologist classifying flies. His state is static and might easily become an old-fogey society ruled by octogenarians hostile to invention and jealous of change. It is science without

art. It exalts order for the sake of science but neglects liberty which is the soul of art. It is a Sparta or a Prussia but not an ideal state. Yet essentially it is right for the world needs the wisest for its rulers. We can not restrict the suffrage but we can restrict the office holders and secure the mixture of democracy and aristocracy that Plato desired. We could accept his contention that statesmen should be trained as thoroughly as physicians and establish university courses in political science and administration. Their doors would be open to all who desired to learn and only the graduates could hold office. Plato realized he had painted an ideal difficult to obtain but did so because he believed there was some value in painting pictures of our desires.

It is difficult to be enthusiastic about his follower Aristotle. He was enthusiastic about nothing and now it is difficult to be enthusiastic about him. We miss the reforming zeal of Plato, the angry love of humanity, the daring originality and lofty imagination, although, after reading Plato, nothing could be more salutary than Aristotle's sceptic calm. We are bothered at first by his logic, particularly his syllogisms (Durant hates them), yet we would be very foolish to forget that two thousand years have changed merely the incidentals of his reasoning, and his creation of the new discipline of thought, and firm establishment of its essential lines, remain among the

lasting achievements of the human mind. He was hampered by the absence of experiment and found his addiction to metaphysics leading to the wildest suppositions. This was the defect of the Greek mind. Undisciplined, it ran to theories and conclusions in an uncharted field. Greek philosophy leaped to heights never reached again while Greek science limped behind. It is the opposite to-day, for while instructive data falls upon us on all sides like lava from Vesuvius, we suffocate with uncoordinated facts. Matthew Arnold tells us that in his day Oxford tutors looked upon the 'Ethics' as infallible. For three hundred years this book and the 'Politics' formed the ruling British mind, perhaps to great and noble achievements, but certainly to a hard and cold efficiency. What would the result have been if the masters of the greatest of empires had been nurtured instead on the holy fervor and the constructive passion of the 'Republic?' Not till new instruments, accumulated observations and patient experiments, remade science and gave irresistible weapons to Occam and Ramus, to Roger and Francis Bacon, was the reign of Aristotle ended. No other mind had for so long a time ruled the intellect of mankind.

Macaulay thought that induction as described by Bacon was a very old-fashioned affair because it was practised by every man. However, not everyone's judgment is accurate nor everyone's judgment profited by, and even

were it otherwise, logic formulates the experience and methods of the wise. Bacon did not claim originality himself, but rather acknowledged his predecessors. Furthermore his method is not the most popular one with science. Hypothesis, deduction and experiment, were used by Darwin on the works of Malthus, and by Einstein on those of Newton. It must also be conceded he failed to keep abreast of his own times for he rejected Copernicus, but one can not expect too much from an overworked man. Into the crevices of a harassed and burdened political career one can not expect to find the vast and complicated creations of Shakespeare, and after all, Shakespeare lacked those very things - erudition and philosophy - which the lordly chancellor possessed. The greatness and weakness of Bacon lay in his passion for unity - to coordinate a hundred sciences. He failed forgivably because he undertook so much, but nevertheless his philosophical works, as Macaulay said, "moved the intellects that moved the world," and his achievement was not less great because it was indirect. In 1662 the founders of the Royal Society said he was their inspiration, and the Encyclopédie of France was dedicated to him. He declared that men are not animals erect but immortal gods. "The Creator has given us souls equal to all the world, and yet satiable not even with a world." Everything is possible to man and perhaps we shall at last learn the noblest

lesson of all - that man must not fight man.

The next intriguing character is Spinoza. He did not seek to found a sect and he founded none, but all philosophy after him is permeated with his thought. Even Goethe was captured by his doctrine, and Fichte, Schelling and Hegel reached their varied pantheisms by combining it with Kant's epistemology. It gave birth to Schopenhauer's "will to live" and Nietzsche's "will to power," and Bergson's "élan vital." In England the tide of the Revolutionary movement took it to Wordsworth and Coleridge. Shelley quoted the "Treatise on Religion and the State" in the original notes to "Queen Mab" and began a translation for which Byron promised a preface. George Eliot translated the 'Ethics' and probably influenced Spencer's conception of the 'Unknowable.' Yet the secret of Spinoza's influence is perhaps that he lends himself to so many interpretations and yields new riches at every reading. One may say of Spinoza what Ecclesiastes said of Wisdom: "The first man knew him not perfectly, no more shall the last find him out. For his thoughts are more deep than the sea, and his counsels profounder than the great deep."

Contemporary with one of the greatest of centuries (1694-1778), Voltaire was the soul and essence of it. With him France began to think. "Literature," said his father, "is the profession of the man who wishes

to be useless to society and a burden to his relatives, and to die of hunger." So François went in for Literature. The fact that he could write verses almost as soon as he could write his name convinced his very practical father that nothing good would ever come of him. Yet on the merit of his genius he invaded the society of the aristocrats of France and the court of Frederick, and his attitude of superiority qualified him for the Bastile. A fugitive in England he was astonished by the freedom with which Bolingbroke, Pope, Addison and Swift wrote whatever they pleased. This inspired the 'Letters on the English' which were published without his consent and necessitated another of his frequent retreats. Upon turning to history he rejected the stories of kings and wrote:

> "My object is the history of the human mind, and not a mere detail of petty facts, nor am I concerned with the history of great lords ...: but I want to know what were the steps by which men passed from barbarism to civilization."

When an admirer praised the work he had done for posterity he answered, "Yes I have planted 4000 trees." This was in his garden at Ferney where at his chateau he received countless famous visitors. Unlike Rousseau, he wished peace rather than revolt, but finally he wrote with fain perception:

> "Everything that I see appears to be throwing broadcast the seed of a revolution which must some day inevitably come, .. The young are fortunate; they will see fine things."

As he fooled his father by becoming a genius, likewise

he fooled his nurse who gave him at birth one day to live. When at the age of eighty-three he produced his play 'Irène' the people forgot that it was poor and marvelled that at eighty-three he should write a play at all. At its presentation they overlooked the play and acclaimed the author. Satisfied, he lived quietly from then till his closely ensuing death, and after the Revolution his remains were returned to Paris escorted by a procession of I00,000 men and women, flanked by 600,000 more. On his tombstone only three words were needed:

"Here lies Voltaire."

Never has a system of thought so dominated an epoch as the philosophy of Immanuel Kant dominated the thought of the nineteenth century. To unite the ideas of Berkeley and Hume with the feelings of Rousseau, to save religion from reason, and yet at the same time to save science from scepticism, was the mission of Kant. Living in the age of Frederick and Voltaire he could not insulate himself from the sceptical current of the time and he was profoundly influenced even by the men whom later he aimed to refute, and perhaps most of all by his favourite enemy, Hume. In his daily life he was regular as a clock and nobody ever could foresee that this timid and modest little professor would startle the world with a new metaphysical system, but at the very outset of his 'Critique of Pure Reason' he flung his challenge at Locke and the English

school: knowledge is not all derived from the senses. When Frederick the Great had passed away and Frederick William II had ascended the throne an edict was sent to Kant condemning his philosophy. It had smacked too strongly of the influence of the French Enlightenment. He was commanded to write more patriotically or be silent. He bowed in assent because he knew his work was done. He had already spoken his message to the world and now he obeyed by remaining silent.

In treating Schopenhauer Durant is at his best. He had already composed a volume on Schopenhauer's works and thus much of his material had been refined and polished before it was selected for the 'Story of Philosophy.' Furthermore he is a lover of life and an enemy of pessimists and Schopenhauer was the world's worst pessimist. There is a large element of egotism in pessimism, he says. It forgets Spinoza's lesson that our terms of moral censure and approbation are merely human judgments, mostly irrelevant when applied to the cosmos as a whole.

> "And what if desire, fulfilled, leads only to another desire ? Perhaps it is better that we should never be content. Happiness, says an old lesson, lies rather in achievement than in possession or satiation. The healthy man asks not so much for happiness as for an opportunity to exercise his capacities. ... We need resistance to raise us as it raises the airplane or the bird; we need obstacles against which to sharpen our strength and stimulate our growth. Life without tragedy would be unworthy of a man. ... Is it true that 'he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow,' and that it is the most highly organized beings that suffer most ? Yes but it is also true that the growth of knowledge increases joy as well as sorrow, and that the

> subtlest delights, as well as the keenest pains, are reserved for the developed soul. ... Virgil, who had tasted every pleasure, and knew the luxuries of imperial favor, at last 'tired of everything except the joys of understanding.' ... And why is death so terrible if not because life is sweet ?"

But Schopenhauer, he proceeds, opened the eyes of psychologists to the subtle depth and omnipresent force of instinct. Intellectualism - the conception of man as above all a thinking animal, consciously adapting means to rationally chosen ends - fell sick with Rousseau, took to its bed with Kant, and died with Schopenhauer. In an age when all the great seemed dead he preached the ennobling worship of heroes, and with all his faults he succeeded in adding another name to theirs.

After Schopenhauer, Herbert Spencer and Frederick Nietzche are treated at length and two chapters are devoted to the three contemporary Europeans, Henri Bergson, Benedetto Croce and Bertram Russel, and the three Americans, George Santayana, William James, and John Dewey. If time and space permitted, it would be interesting to review them too, although, we have treated this book sufficiently already to be able to appraise it properly. The foremost criticism which it faced was that voiced by Wickham.

> "What about the Scholastics ?
> The Scholastics were not only theologians, but philosophers and scientists; they dominated the thought of Christendom for a thousand years, and still dominate a large section of Christendom, not

> counting their influence in quarters where it is felt rather than recognized.
>
> Durant admits that his treatment of Scholasticism is 'inadequate,' but excuses himself with the plea that the inadequacy was due to lack of space. But he finds space for ten and a half pages about Benedetto Croce - and no page at all for St. Augustine, Albertus Magnus, or Thomas Aquinas.
>
> The Angelic Doctor's name, however, is mentioned. It appears in a pictorial table of 'philosophic affiliations,' constructed in the manner of a family tree. .. Aquinas appears to be quite free from any unquestionable philosophic affiliation with St. Augustine, Albertus Magnus, St. Paul, or even Jesus Christ. We begin to be glad that Durant had no room for an 'adequate' treatment of the Scholastics."

The editor of Variety did not appreciate the book any more than Wickham and his pen was even more caustic.

> "The middle-western teacher who adopts Durant has solved part of his problem and perhaps the major part: students will read the book - there's no denying that - and term papers will not be so dull. But there are times of course when the ideals of scholarship weigh heavily on one's conscience, and one wonders uneasily if the law of compensation is not, after all, eternally at work, and if the gain is really worth the cost."

We have dwelt long on this book because it has aroused so much condemnation but we must now hurry on to review his 'Mansions of Philosophy.' "This book," says the author, "is an attempt at a consistent philosophy of life." Why, he asks, is Philosophy for whom once men were willing to die, now dead ? Because she has lost the spirit of adventure. The sciences have stolen her ancient spacious realms. Scholastics, he thinks, have buried it beneath theology. Aristotle knew that the field of philosophy is not a puzzle hiding in the clouds but "the vast

and total problem of the meaning and value and possibilities of men in this boundless and fluent world." Can we restore philosophy which is "a study of experience as a whole, or of a portion of experience in relation to the whole ?" Any subject can be the material of philosophy and the sciences are the windows through which philosophy sees the world. The differences among philosophers are due to the changing terminology of their times rather than to the hostility of their ideas, and in great measure to the inconstancy of science itself. "Aristotle's science is contradicted at almost every point by the sciences of to-day; but his philosophy will remain illuminating and profound when the science of to-day will be a thing of scorn and ridicule, deposed and cast out by the passing infallibilities of another age."

The kingdom of Philosophy is entered through Logic, Epistemology, Metaphysics, History, Politics, Aesthetics, Ethics, and finally Religion for death too belongs to it. It is concerned with the problem of immortality as it is concerned with every vital issue. If there is any intelligence guiding the universe then philosophy wants to know it.

Beginning his excursion in this realm he first seeks truth. What is truth ? Anatole France considered it the profoundest question ever asked. The test of truth is sensation but reason is its discoverer. From

truth he turns to matter and the growing importance philosophers allot to it. Summing up his treatment of matter he declares:

> "However, one suspects a science that grows more erudite from day to day, and every day refutes its yesterday; that offers us atoms and then electrons, and then quanta, and at last a holy picture of a material world miraculously built out of electric charges having no material nuclei."

Turning to the subject of life he faces the experiments of Pasteur and the motto of Sir William Harvey (Durant would not invoke the teaching of the Scholastics) - omne ovum ex ovo, omnis cellula e cellula, omne vivum e vivo, and declares that only a dogmatist can be sure that chemistry will never produce life. For him the transition from lifeless matter to the simplest form of cell is the logical first step in the development of the first plants. Plants that did not have the power to change inorganic matter into food developed the power of locomotion and the nervous system. The brain grew out of the olfactory nerve and intelligence operated for some aeons through the sense of smell. Gradually the head ruled the body, and coordination, adaptation and control, grew in action and reaction with the growing brain. The brain increases in proportion to the size of the body up the ladder which we climbed of fishes, reptiles, birds and mammals.

His next problem is whether or not man is a machine. Determinism is the oldest of philosophies. When

individuals seem to lose their feeling of significance they feel themselves to be but futile atoms projected unasked out of nothing. Civilizations like senile souls are apt to be deterministic; unable to overcome the forces of death, they dignify their fatigue as fatality, and their defeat as destiny. Christianity grew in this dark soil of despair like a slender flower of hope, but gloomy faithlessness reached its nadir in the predestination of melancholy Calvin. All the world became intoxicated with mathematics and Descartes announced that all the world was a machine. Then the worker immured within factory walls, seeing all the throbing life around him slip by on pulleys and revolve on wheels, forgot the feeling of life radiating from everywhere in the country-sides and became convinced that he too was a machine. The Industrial Revolution made cities, and cities made crowds, and crowds unmade men. Man became a creature composed of heredity and environment; whatever he did was the result of ancestral or physical causes over which he had no control; he was merely a marvelous, superfluously animated automaton. Therefore he was "not guilty" if he committed crimes, society was to blame; if he was a fool it was the fault of the machine that had slipped a cog in generating him; he should not be deprived for that reason of his right to vote or become president. But is man a machine ? By locomotion, digestion, growth, regeneration, consciousness and reproduction

He is different, and at the very bottom of our souls we find desire which is "the very essence of man."

He turns to morals - "those things that usually change so slowly but to-day are changing like clouds in the wind." Chivalry and gallantry have not survived the emancipation of women. Chastity and modesty have fallen to low repute. The stage rivals the candor of the Restoration days and marriage is losing its popularity. The family, once nurse of morals and basis of social order, has been broken to pieces in a generation. Alterations in the economic basis of life are changing morals. There have been two such great transitions, the passing from hunting to agriculture and the passing from agriculture to industry. The farms used to support marriage. Children would work for their parents till adolescence was complete; no money had to be spent on their education; even girls were moderately useful. Therefore motherhood was sacred, birth-control was immoral, and large families were pleasing unto God. Suddenly factories appeared. The family unit was broken up into individuals working for individual pay cheques. Women were not as useful in the home for much of their work was being done in the factories. Even they followed their tasks into the factory. Marriage became deferred to an unnatural age and moral bounds snapped from the excessive strain. At last nature has given its ultimatum: we must find means to persuade marriage to return to the natural

age or accept wide pre-marital liberty. Man is by nature social. Societies are older than man.

The powerful pen next turns to the immorality in business and politics, and he attacks the crime of war. Economics is thought to be a science of wealth and not of welfare. Perhaps, however, while we scoff science is producing a larger morality. The world has been waiting a long time for the web of commercial exchange and interdependence which made states into unions and unions into empires to build at last an economic order. Already it has become important to keep one's creditors solvent and even millionaires think so as they watch the ticker. The time must already be here when we should be loyal to humanity whenever national interests oppose the interests of mankind.

A treatise on love follows. He traces its biological development and its history. Nature completes a cycle of desire with a child which binds the parents together more tightly in case the bonds have been weakening. The woman is a revelation again and the ancient wonder of the child wraps her about in a novel and irresistible charm. "That missing, home becomes a house - dead walls around the corpse of love; and soon there are only fragments where there might have been a family."

The literature on the subject of men and women, we are told, is the most interesting and unreliable

in the world. Bernard Shaw said no man dare write the truth about marriage while his wife lives. Durant dates the emancipation of the modern woman from 1882 when the factory owners in the British House of Commons enacted that women should be allowed to retain the wages they earned. Employers had to think of profits and women's labour cost less than their husband's. Products of the home were now made in the factories and it was to women's credit that they sought to do their work wherever it was to be found. While editors, preachers and statesmen, warned that Socialism would destroy the home it was disintegrated in one generation by the effects of the new Capitalism. It might have survived had children been economic assets on the spacious farms but the Industrial Revolution had built up cities where they were only a burden. Even husbands never realized that "children cost less than cabarets." In the midst of our machines we have lost sight of the fact that the basic reality of life is not politics nor industry but human relationship, the associations of a man with a woman and of parents with a child. The emancipated woman then is the product of economic development not willed by herself. She is merely adapting herself to her situation with astounding versatility. The breakdown of marriage comes when love finds its pockets empty. After love has starved through youth marriage celebrates its death. The ceremony is not in a Church but in a city hall basement,

and the couple do not return to a cottage with a garden, shady trees and fragrant flowers but to an apartment that is not a home. Marriage no longer being a parental association time is a burden and divorce follows. Prescriptions are numerous but the last word must be for monogamy.

We arrive at one of the most interesting parts of this book. The author, his wife Ariel, and a friend Philip, are walking along together discussing history. They want to see it in the perspective of its entirety. As they climb a little hill they come upon a strange collection from history, also discussing history and the books they have written. Bossuet says it is the drama of God's holy will and Anatole France scoffs at him for reducing history to the will of God. Buckle describes the steps leading to civilization and suggests Montesqieu was the first to seek the specific causes of national greatness and decay. Montesqieu remarks that the differences of character and temperament which so largely affects the destiny of nations are due to the influences of climate. Anatole France disagrees because great nations have appeared almost everywhere on the earth and described like parabolas of exaltation and decay. Then Grant expounds the greatness of the Nordics from their first appearance as Sacae introducing Sanskrit to India till their slow extinction in our day by deterioration of culture, inter-marriage and difference in birth-rate. Anatole France challenges

their value anyway, calling them warriors, pirates, marauders and tax-gatherers. Grant says they organized the states of Europe and made civilization possible but Nietzsche protests that that is an argument against them. Ratzel thinks origin is not important since geographical environment forms the people, but Karl Marx enters the fray to argue that at all times the basic factor in history is the economic factor. Then Carlyle contends that Universal history is created by the genius of the greatest men, and this is supported by William James and Tarde. Next Ward points out to Voltaire who wanted to know by what steps man had passed from barbarism to civilization, that it was by inventions. The steam engine made the nineteenth century: electricity, chemistry and airplanes are making the twentieth. Karl Marx interjects that these inventions were the result of economic requirements. Anatole France has the last word when he says that regardless of the causes it is the great men that count. The men from the past disappear and the three friends carry on the conversation. The narrator has been impressed by a remark of Voltaire that all history should be written by philosophers because they would look at things as a whole. Philip sees a new idea for writing history. Instead of sketching it in longitudinal sections about one particular branch of human conduct at a time, it would be better to treat all the parts of a period together. They decide to write such a

history and Ariel volunteers to treat the ladies. One question remained undecided by these immortals, she remarked. They had not revealed whether there was any progress in history. Her husband therefore undertook to outline the problem whether progress is a delusion. First he sketched the case against progress, pointing out that Ruskin, a rich man, questioned the identity of progress and wealth. Are wealthy shop-keepers and shippers, he asked, better specimens of humanity than the Englishmen of Johnson's or Shakespeare's or Chaucer's days ? When describing present day culture he said: "Music went down into the slums and the factories to find harmonies adapted to the nervous organization and morality of elevated butchers and emancipated chambermaids." Yet tracing the development of speech, fire, conquest of the animals, agriculture, social organization and morality, tools, science, education, writing and print, he concluded that progress is real. The historian sees only decadence ahead of civilization as he sees death certain for life, but civilizations do not die. They only move. The accomplishments of one is the basis of the next. As he writes, the Seventh Symphony floats through his radio. The genius of the composer is not dead. It has been preserved, and fills his room, in all its majesty.

He sees the freedom of the new age has its difficulties but he clings to the Jeffersonian ideal of

government that governs least, hoping that perhaps the time will come when men will understand that the highest function of government is not to legislate but to educate. Democracy need not be a failure but there is no solution except education. Government by aristocracy (meaning the best) is necessary. He draws a comical picture of a machine-elected mayor who decides, realizing his incapacity to govern his metropolis and the importance of his decisions on generations, to call an advisory committee representing the highest talents of all important branches of urban life. The committee recommends education but the president of the Real Estate Owners' Association protests the cost and finally the plan is defeated by the other machine-elected men on the council.

One of the most important chapters in the book is a dialogue on religion. In this conversation the anthropologist traces the development of "religion" through all ancient mythology and magic, and there is a discussion of all the religions from Confucius to Christ. The Chinaman expounds Buddhism and Mohammedanism and the Hindu reveals the mystic beliefs of India. A Jewess describes Judaism, and an historian tackles Christianity. An agnostic sarcastically argues the immortality of his dog's soul, claiming his faithful dog is a better Christian than himself. A Catholic and a Protestant generally fight side by side, disagreeing at times on points of doctrine, and

their arguments are perhaps as fair as a non-believer might be expected to frame for them. In the end these atheists, agnostics and the like, seem to agree Christianity would be an excellent thing if stripped of its superfluous belief in immortality.

Finally, after describing the nature of life he addresses a letter to pessimists. Admitting all men's troubles to be real, including the slavery and suffering of many workers and the general apathy of life, his remedy is for people to create their own happiness. "Marry!", he says. "Would the fate of the Universe or the Republican party darken your soul if some perfect arm were curving about your neck, or a chubby child were bouncing on your knee ? What if the whole question whether life is worth living depends more upon you than upon life ?"

Now that we have reviewed his two large volumes on philosophy we need develop his ideas no further but before we proceed further let us see how his philosophy is applied. Five and six hundred page books dealing with this profound subject are not the most popular form of literature. Sometimes, however, the nucleus of a problem makes interesting reading, particularly when abridged into about one hundred and fifty pages written in a brilliant style. 'On the Meaning of Life' is just such a booklet. For this symposium he has written a letter to "famous contemporaries here and abroad for whose intelli-

gence I have high regard." He has confessed time after time that the loss of his religion has been a bitter blow. He has been saddened by the ugly aspects of life, and addressed this letter with the question - what is the meaning or worth of human life ? Astronomy, geology and biology, he argues, have proclaimed man's insignificance. History has denied progress, and science has reduced the once incorruptible soul to a transient incandescence of the brain. The Industrial Revolution has destroyed the home, the old morality, and perhaps will even destroy the race. Nothing is certain except defeat and death - a sleep from which, it seems, there is no awakening. The greatest mistake in human history was the discovery of these "truths." What keeps you going, and what help, if any, does religion give you ?

The book warns us that the author's own conclusions can not be drawn from this picture. This despair is not indigenous to his nature but he has wished to paint the blackest scene to contrast against "the superficial optimism with which men are wont to turn aside the profounder issues of life."

Yet Theodore Dreiser, the novelist, replied that Durant's diatribe was the best answer. The American critic H.L.Mencken said he was devoid of religion but enjoyed his work, and Sinclair Lewis made use of another opportunity to attack even the need for religion. André

Maurois compared life with a little story of some English men and women who took a one-way rocket trip to the moon. After a few generations the existence of the King of Great Britain was of no importance to the descendants. He adds another example of some ants which philosophize about their own unimportance and the minuteness even of man. The late Will Rogers humourously wrote; "Don't have an ideal to work for. ... Believe in something for another world but don't be too set on what it is, and then you won't start out on that life with a disappointment." Abbé Dimnet seemed to sense a Racine attacking Port-Royal and wrote from Paris: "Your letter expresses dissatisfaction too violent to last," as his conclusion to a long reply. Others were not so important and we have already sampled representative letters,- those of atheists predominating.

Count Keyserling refused to write anything for which another writer would collect the royalties, and George Bernard Shaw with customary bluntness but exceptional modesty sent a post card asking "How the devil do I know ?" Perhaps the most interesting response psychologically, came from a convict recently sentenced to pass his remaining years behind prison walls. A life of crime had dulled his senses to all thought of religion and a hereafter but he was living for the joy of living.

The book ends with a typical Durant letter of cheer based on his philosophy with which we are now well

acquainted.

We have just used the word "philosophy" loosely, since, as we have seen he built no philosophic structure, but these works assume themselves to be philosophy, and the world accepts them as such, and all that is destructive in them is directed against philosophy. Probably no three books ever written more strongly influenced their readers against the existence of God than the ones we have just reviewed.

AS A LITERARY CRITIC

One may well realize, before setting out to be a critic of a critic, that such a roll requires the most presumptuous, conceited and egotistical specimen of a human being. As there is nothing in all the universe that will produce colour or sound unassisted, it should be recognized that no judgment can be entirely objective. Just as colour and sound require a medium and an organ to complete their transmission, so literary decisions must depend on the light in which things are seen and the intellect which passes judgment. No critic, therefore, could possibly be fair to his victim unless he succeeded in obtaining an identical medium and in assuming a similar condition of the mind. After all the only test for fairness will resolve into whether an author has been true to his own principles. We can not censure the blind because they can not see nor the deaf because they can not hear: we should not censure anyone for not perceiving as we do. Can we be fair to Will Durant ?

In his book 'Adventures in Genius' he selects the ten greatest thinkers and the ten greatest poets of all time. They make two amazing lists. Let us investegate!

A thinker, he says, must be a philosopher or a scientist. The term can not include such men as Euripides, Lucretius, Dante, Leonardo, Shakespeare or Goethe, who were only secondarily thinkers and artists above all. He also excludes (as we shiver when he lists together)

Jesus, Buddha, Augustine and Luther, because "these founders and renewers of religion moved the world ... not by reason or thought but by feeling and noble passion."

First, chronologically, he picks Confucius, preferring him to Buddha and Christ because he was a moral philosopher with secular motives rather than a preacher of a religious faith based on supernatural conditions, and far more resembles Socrates than Jesus. He seems to admire him for the "sound moral and political philosophy framed within a paragraph" which he often quotes. We read that even in his life-time his followers foresaw the influence he was to have in moulding the courtesy and poise and placid wisdom of the chinese, and when he died built huts around his grave and remained there nearly three years.

Next he picks Plato, on account, one would gather, of his 'Republic.' Durant has ever remained slightly socialistic and quotes Emerson as saying of the 'Republic:' "Burn the libraries for their value is in this book." In a hundred countries and in a thousand cities, a hundred thousand students, young and old, are absorbed in it and the 'Dialogues.' Consider the academy he founded, the first and longest lived of the universities of the world, and the perpetual revival of his philosophy from the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria to the Cambridge Platonists of England, and the permeation of Christian theology with Platonic thought and symbolism. One of the interesting

parts of Durant's Plato is that he is Plato and Socrates combined. Wickham has observed his inclination towards making dead men legendary, and here he has seized the story from Dupréel's 'La Legende Socratique' that Socrates is a character from mythology. "How much of Plato's Socrates was Socrates, and how much of it was Plato," he says, "we shall probably never know. Let us take Plato as implying both."

"All the world would agree that Aristotle must be in our list." The inclusion is surprise number one for the Scholastics but it indicates how far Durant will go in order to adhere to his principles. However he admits Aristotle only by overcoming "the barrier of scholastic terminology and scornfully concentrated thought." This intellect of almost unbelievable depth and range, considered and illuminated and gave a defensible solution to every problem of science and philosophy. Dante placed him first among all thinkers and indeed Confucius alone had as wide an influence. Extending over a millenium of intellectual history, it "came to an end only with the audacious irreverence of Occam and Ramus, the experimental science of Roger Bacon, and the innovating philosophy of Francis Bacon." In this tour of the world there is no other name that so long inspired and enthralled the minds of men.

Surprise number two is the fourth in the list of great thinkers. Will Durant has included St. Thomas

Aquinas as one of the world's greatest minds ! He does it though it breaks his heart, he says. He would prefer to substitute Spinoza or Nietzsche but that would be making an album of favourites rather than a gallery of great men. When Roman civilization collapsed the Church healed the strife of factions and brought men back from the battle-fields to settled life. Emperors passed but popes remained. Legions ceased to march and missionaries quietly created a new order in which thought could grow once more. When the work of preparation was complete along came another Aristotle, St. Thomas of Aquin "took the universe for his specialty and flung a frail bridge of reason across the chasms between knowledge and belief." Once every intellect honoured the Angelic Doctor and every philosophy took his gigantic 'Summae' as its premise. Even to-day in a thousand colleges his thought is reverenced as still "sounder than science," and his philosophy is the official system of the most powerful church in Christendom.

Then comes Copernicus, the Polish monk who first said that this earth was but a minor satellite of a minor sun. His book 'On the Revolutions of Celestial Orbs' caused a greater revolution than any book in history. The neighbourliness of Earth and God as conceived by the Medi-evalists was completely contradicted by this atheistic blasphemy. God who had seemed to inhabit the friendly and flowing clouds disappeared into the far reaches of illimit-

able space. We know Copernicus only as a scientific thinker but with him begins the revolt of "reason against faith."

Next Bacon called men to the study of science in the search for truth and from academic disputes re-routed men's minds to inductive inquiry into nature's laws. He inspired the Royal Society of Great Britain and the great Encyclopedia of France, pointed a hundred sciences to their tasks, foretold their unbelievable victories, and overthrew Aristotelian logic.

The place of Isaac Newton also seems incontestable. His laws of motion and mechanics formed the basis of all subsequent thought. The discovery of gravitation brought the confusion of the stars into an "almost organic unity." In fact Voltaire proclaimed him the world's greatest man.

The latter, too, gains his entrance to Durant's list because he began "the great age of the Enlightenment." Durant remarks that Voltaire's name will shock the Scholastics. We suspect he likes to shock Scholastics. He admits that Voltaire was not original but does not hold that against him. "Granted that Voltaire, like Bacon, 'lighted his candle at every man's torch;' it remained that he made the torch burn so brightly that it enlightened all mankind. ... We must ask of Voltaire, not do we accept his conclusions, but did the world accept them ?"

After Voltaire comes Kant. Durant honours

him because he "laboured best to rescue mind from matter," and credits him with bringing back to life "magician-wise, the dear beliefs of the ancient faith." He says the world heard Kant gladly because it felt it could live by faith alone. Even Schopenhauer and Nietzsche accepted him. Apparently Kant, "arguing so irrefutably because so unintelligibly, had won the battle against materialism and atheism and the world could hope again."

Then came Darwin. It is difficult to say what the final extent of his influence will be. "If Darwin was wrong, the world may forget him as it has almost forgotten Democritus and Anaxagoras; if he was right, men will have to date from 1859 the beginning of modern thought. ... Copernicus had reduced the earth to a speck among melting clouds; Darwin reduced man to an animal fighting for his transient mastery of the globe. Man was no longer the son of God; he was the son of strife, and his wars made the fiercest brutes ashamed of their amateur cruelty. The human race was no longer the favored creation of a benevolent deity; it was a species of ape, which the fortunes of variation and selection had raised to a precarious dignity, and which in its turn was destined to be surpassed and to disappear. Man was not immortal; he was condemned to death from the hour of his birth." The old faith fought fiercely but vainly for its life and now "the victors, exhausted by the contest, sit sadly to-day among

the ruins, secretly mourning their triumph, secretly yearning for the old world which their victory has destroyed."

In making these selections we feel Durant has done his work well - that is, he has kept faith with the standards he proclaimed without fear or prejudice. Like a historian selecting the decisive battles of the world he has aimed at being guided by effects. It is very true he has exaggerated: faith is not completely dead as he would lead one to believe. In fact it is still the most universally dominant force operating on the everyday actions of men. However it is a human weakness to judge the world by one's own circumstances. With his dark glasses he naturally sees a dark world.

Yet we can not feel he has chosen his ten greatest poets so wisely, perhaps because he has abandoned his rules. They form an even more amazing list.

Number One is Homer. We can trust Durant to condemn him to legend even while elevating him to his list. Before writing came men composed the tales of the race in ballads which were chanted, rhythm aiding memory. The 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey' are the accumulated narratives of many travelling bards who sang the epics of Greece. Homer was probably one of the singers who chanted these commemorative songs; we give his name to all the poets who composed these tales because we are at ease with unity and dislike the fragmentariness of truth. Such epics,

'vedas' or 'sagas' are natural to a nation's childhood and are the precursors of those patriotic histories in which one's country is always right, wins every battle, and is especially beloved of God. They are not literature as we know it now but they are literature as it was then. They are not complex in art or thought but in Homer's day life was action and literature was action's product.

Before proceeding further he pauses to face the test for a poet's greatness. The objective test of fame or influence breaks down. A poet is not necessarily supreme because he pleases the multitude. If that were so the best critics might be in the minority. Prejudices must have their place. Those who have brought that strange mixture of music, emotion, imagery and thought, which is poetry, will be the honoured ones.

Accordingly he proclaims "David" the psalmist. All that is known of this author is that his name was not David. He speculates:

> "these 'Songs of Praise' were composed by many hands, and any hand but David's; they were accumulated through centuries by the priests of the temple at Jerusalem; and they were brought together only one hundred and fifty years before Christ, nearly a millenium after David had ceased to be.
>
> No matter who wrote them, or when; there they are, the profoundest lyrics in literature, so vivid with ecstasy that even those who doubt all dogmas feel in the blood a strange response to their music still."

He quotes as example the Twenty-third Psalm.

Returning to Greece he selects the great

dramatist Euripides describing in 415 B.C. the siege of Troy. The Greeks have killed Hector and taken Troy, and captured Hector's wife, mother and sister for slaves, and destroyed his son. Durant quotes the passages of the grief-stricken women. "Here," he says, "is all the power of Shakespeare without his range and subtlety, but with a stoical passion that moves us as nothing in all modern drama can, except the dying Lear." He spoke even during the fever of war to show its futile bestiality, and presented "Greeks to the Greeks, as barbarians in victory, and their enemies as heroes in defeat." Greek drama, tired of Lympus, was brought down to earth by Euripides that it might deal with the affairs of men. "Have all the nations of the world since his time," asked Goethe, "produced one dramatist worthy to hand him his slippers ?" Durant answers "Just one."

Turning to Rome he chooses Lucretius, the poet of gloom and despair who took his own life at the age of forty-one. 'De Rerum Natura' appeals to him as the most marvelous performance in all antique literature. He sympathizes with him, a man born for peace and forced to live amid Caesar's wars, but we venture the surmise that it is his pessimism which is found most endearing. He sees everywhere "two self-cancelling movements, growth and decay, reproduction and destruction, Venus and Mars, life and death. All forms begin and have their end; only atoms, space and law remain; birth is a prelude to corruption, and even

this massive universe will thaw and flow back into formlessness." What ennobles him is his sincerity. His Latin is rude - Cicero and Virgil have not yet appeared to refine it - and he never knew that gayety is wiser than wisdom.

Dante comes next, being the author of the 'Divine Comedy,' the greatest poem of modern times. Human sympathy is always extended to the oppressed and perhaps Durant is supplied with more of the milk of human kindness than average human beings. He is constantly mingling with the fugitives, and though he is attracted by drama he is repelled by suffering, and these favourites shine most brightly before his eyes. At Dante's tomb in Ravenna he tells us that Byron, another exile, after five hundred years had passed, knelt and understood. Durant also understands these eccentric geniuses.

Of course he chooses Shakespeare to hand Euripides his slippers. His sonnets for which his own day acclaimed him are not rated so highly now but his dramas have taken their place. We might remark that it is strange, now that Romanticism has won its place in properly balanced English poetry, and lyricism is considered almost as a necessary factor, that blank verse should continue to enjoy the highest laurels. It bespeaks the power of the author and Durant is right. He loves the riotous energy which was the source of the poet's genius, and he likes him most for the madness and richness of his speech. "He

became through despair the greatest poet of all. ... No man ever so mastered a language, or used it with such lordly abandon. Anglo-Saxon words, French words, ale-house words, medical words, legal words; tripping monosyllabic lines and sonorous sesquipedalian speech; pretty lady-like euphuisms and rough idiomatic obscenities; only an Elizabethan could have dared to write such English."

Before bestowing the next laurel he pauses to review those who have had to be passed by:- Sappho, Aeschylus and Sophocles, Catullus, Horace, Ovid and Virgil, Petrarch and Tasso, Omar-Fitzgerald, Chaucer and Villon. "But this is small offence by the side of the sins we must yet commit; even Milton and Goethe are to be called but not chosen. ... worst of all to leave Goethe aside, who wrote in his youth like Heine, in his maturity like Euripides, and in his old age like a Gothic cathedral."

Finally he names, not the philosopher Goethe, but the poet John Keats. Stricken by consumption in 1819 Keats wrote to Fanny Brawne: "I have left no immortal work behind me - nothing to make my friends proud of my memory. ... If I had time I would have made myself remembered." "If I had time!" exclaims Durant, "this is the tragedy of all great men ! Keats never wrote anything of importance after that but his friends are remembered because of him; and he has left behind him poems as immortal as English and more perfect than Shakespeare." He quotes the odes 'To A

Nightengale' and 'On Melancholy,' and leaves Keats repeating his words "If I had had time!"

The news of his death inspired Shelley to pour out his wrath and grief in the greatest of English elegies - Adonais. With his feminine sensitivity he must have felt that he would fall next in the war between poetry and fact. He deplored history as the record of miseries and crimes, and studied not the vicissitudes of man but his poetry and religion. Trelawney, on meeting him wondered if it were possible that this mild-looking beardless boy could be the veritable monster at war with all the world. Yet no one was ever more completely and exclusively a poet. When his heart was buried in the Protestant cemetry at Rome a slab was erected bearing the simple words "Cor cordium," and when his wife died twenty-nine years later, in her copy of Adonais at the page which speaks of immortality, the ashes of her poet-lover were found wrapped in a silken covering.

His tenth great poet is Whitman. "It was a great revolution in the history of literature when a man appeared who saw the elements of poetry ...in the very life about him. Almost for the first time a poet was to find themes worthy of noble verse in the lives of common men... Whitman dared to see America with all her faults as material for song... And so truly did he see and sing that at last he became not only the poet of democracy and America, but

by the greatness of his soul and the universality of his vision, the poet of the modern world." Yet when he published his 'Leaves of Grass' all America denounced him except one man - but that man was none other than Emerson and he proclaimed it "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom America has yet contributed."

We fear this brief summary has complicated our problem rather than elucidated it. We started with the premise that fair judgment was an ideal impossible because of the subjectivity in judgment. We are more than convinced of this truth and we fear we can not remain impartial but at least we can try.

It was surprising to learn, when reviewing Durant's ten greatest thinkers, that he would go as far as he did in regarding them through their influence. After reading his 'Story of Philosophy' and finding he had no room for certain scholars that one would naturally expect to find included, it becomes rather amazing to find one of them listed among the greatest thinkers of all time. It would seem conclusive that the 'Story of Philosophy' was never intended to be a proportionate history of philosophy but rather a discussion of a few philosophers which the author has found interested him most. His real history of philosophy is included in his 'Adventures in Genius.' Of course even an objective test may not be completely fair but at least it is as unprejudiced as possible. At any rate he has bowed to

public opinion in this book and acclaimed his choices as he judged they influenced the world. Yet there remains the judgment of influence. Did Voltaire, for example, have the influence that is blamed on or credited to him ? Is Darwin's destruction as complete as Durant thinks it is ? Perhaps the material necessary for judgment is lacking.

It is when we turn to his poets that we begin to have our apprehensions about his judgments. He admits that an objective test is impossible and that he is selecting the ones that stir his spirit most strongly. It is an honest though necessary confession. We know by now that underneath his non-belief is an unexplainable attachment to men like Keats and Shelley, Voltaire and Anatole France, who have discarded all but a trace of belief in immortality. Further we know that what he looks for most in an artist is some dramatic revolution against the accepted order of things. It is a foregone conclusion that with eyes turned towards these men he will see them first, but his selection becomes fatally marred by the inclusion of Whitman. Perhaps the United States are entitled to have produced within a half century after their creation one of the ten greatest poets of all time, but was that one really Whitman ? Can we be sure the masses were wrong and Emerson right in prefering him to Longfellow ? Surely the gripping rhythms of Edgar Allan Poe and the gentle kindliness of Edgar Guest are not inferior to the prose-like lines of

Whitman ! Surely when Emerson said 'Leaves of Grass' was the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom America had yet produced, he did not mean to qualify its author as one of the world's greatest poets ! How can these lines, with little more rhyme or rhythm than a translation, compare with the melody of Tennyson which appeals by its sweetness alone even to people who know no English ? Furthermore, one might ask, with justice, if it is honest to say he was almost the first to find themes worthy of verse in the lives of the common people. Had Wordsworth not excelled in depicting the commonplace things ? Whitman wrote this poem in 1855, after the Romantic period had become history in English literature, and who will say it forgot to deal with the every-day things in human lives ? One is inclined to feel that the spirit of Christianity that permeates English literature has discredited its greatest poets in the eyes of Durant; and one is inclined to surmise that the same is true for the greatest poets of other tongues.

AS AN HISTORIAN

After the ghosts from history had disappeared from their audience, - Durant, his wife Ariel, and their friend Philip, - it was decided to write a history that would answer Voltaire's wishes. In 1935 the first volume appeared bearing at its beginning the words of the renowned French poet:

> "I want to know what were the steps by which men passed from barbarism to civilization."

The author tells us he has worked for twenty years in the preparation of this volume and hopes to publish four volumes more at five year intervals. It is a mild rebellion against the customary way of writing history in separate longitudinal sections such as, economic history, political history, the history of philosophy, the history of science, etc., on the ground that such division does not do justice to the unity of human life. Few persons indeed, could qualify to undertake such a ponderous task but with Will Durant the immensity of the scope provides an adequate outlet for the extensive information which he has been storing in his versatile mind. In the 'Story of Civilization' he has presented his work in the truest Durant style. It is more representative of the author than any of his other books, exhibiting his philosophic beliefs, his critical power, and his great research, in the style that is his own.

As if written by a French logician this book begins with a description of terms. Civilization is

social order promoting cultural creation. Four elements constitute it: economic provision, political organization, moral tradition, and the pursuit of knowledge and the arts. It is encouraged or impeded by geological, geographical and economic conditions. These physical and biological contingencies are only prerequisites to civilization. Subtle psychological factors must enter into play; political order, unity of language, a unifying moral code, and education, and, he adds, perhaps there must be some unity of basic belief, some faith supernatural or utopian that lifts morality from calculation to devotion and gives life nobility and significance despite our mortal brevity. (It is noteworthy he is keenly aware of the importance of religion.) The disappearance of these conditions - sometimes of even one of them - may destroy a civilization, for civilization is not something inborn or imperishable; it must be acquired anew every generation. The reason for this, he believes, is that man differs from the beast only by education which may be defined as the technique of transmitting civilization. If man's ability to learn may be classed as technique, we are here given an accurate definition of education anyway. The introduction ends with the declaration: "Civilizations are the generations of the human soul. Let us before we die, gather up our heritage and offer it to our children."

At first, man in a savage state like the Indians of America or the Eskimo, was in an age of hunting.

Preservation of food being unknown, he made no provision for the morrow. Then as the first age gave way to the pastoral stage, animals were domesticated. The cow became not just a source of meat but also of milk and power. Meanwhile women discovered the bounty of the soil. While the male was absent on the chase the wife would dig roots, pluck fruit and nuts from the trees, and collect honey, mushrooms, and natural grains. (It will be remembered that Mrs. Durant volunteered to write the women's part.) Even to-day some tribes in Australia make no attempt to plant seeds and cultivate. The first step in the transition was the sowing of seeds in holes made by a sharp stick. Then the hoe was used to cultivate and later metals were forged to make ploughshares. The change from meat to vegetable foods was only gradual but never complete. Hunting and fishing were modes of activity destined to survive in the highest forms of civilized society. Man still prefers the old food to the new. At one time cannibalism was almost universal and in the Upper Congo men and women were bought and sold as articles of food. With grim humour he writes:

> "Doubtless the custom had certain social advantages. It anticipated Dean Swift's plan for the utilization of superfluous children, and it gave the old an opportunity to die usefully."

If man began with speech, and civilization with agriculture, industry began with fire. From bamboo men made shafts, knives, needles and bottles, and it was but a step to weaving and pottery. The mechanism of transport, the process of

trade, and the medium of exchange, were the three further developments from the primitive man to economic civilization. The primitive communism gave way to private property and slavery. Gradually through agriculture and slavery, through the division of labour and the inherent diversity of men, natural society was replaced by inequality and class divisions.

States were composed by naturally anarchistic tendencies of men being subdued by the necessity of a united defence and powerful offence. Such institutions as private property and marriage had to be safeguarded by law and the principle of revenge dominated the first stage of legal development. It appeared in the Lex Talonis of the Romans and the Code of Hammurabi and in the Mosaic demand of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and lurks behind most legal punishments even in our day. Then came damages in place of revenge; later trial by ordeal and then assumption by the state of the role of arbitrator. The family and the clan also took their part in the regulation of the state. In primitive tribes paternity was scarcely recognised but women alone were the physiological and economic necessities for the continuity of the race, at times even ruling the clan. Even property passed through the female line. While men clung for centuries to hunting and herding, the women developed agriculture near the camp and those busy arts of the home which were the most

important industries of later days. However, as industry became more complex the stronger sex exerted its mastery. Men demanded fidelity from women that they might pass their property to children presumably their own. Wives were reduced to slavery by ownership and everywhere the lives of women were considered cheaper than the lives of men. Even marriage began as a form of the law of property, as a part of the institution of slavery.

Civilization would be impossible without morality. The first concern of morality is the regulation of the sexes. The form of regulation is marriage, defined as the association of mates for the care of offspring. This institution, he surmises, was originated through the desire of the male to have cheap slaves. Polygamy flourished when war made females excessive and wives were procured by purchase or conquest. The struggle for existence in a civilization is transferred from the individual to the group, and other things being equal, the ability to compete with rival groups will be proportional to the ability of the individual members and families to combine with one another. Hence every society inculcates a moral code to mitigate the natural war of life. As the individual does not naturally subordinate his personal interests to those of the group, societies have not been content to rest their moral codes on economic or political utility but instead have made use of religion. Religion

is inspired by the fear of death and hope of divine aid. Primitive civilizations worshiped the awe-inspiring mysteries of time and space such as celestial bodies. Then animals and that mysterious thing called reproduction also became idolized. Ancestors, too, were worshiped. Having created omnipotent gods, sacrifices, even human sacrifices, were needed and invented to propitiate their wrath. Morality was supported by the myths and taboos of religion. Government, the most unnatural and necessary of institutions, since man is not naturally obedient, has usually required the support of piety. As science increases "the movement of liberation rises to an exuberant worship of reason and falls to a paralyzing disillusionment with every dogma and every idea. ... Conduct, deprived of its religious supports deteriorates into epicurean chaos; and life itself, shorn of consoling faith, becomes a burden alike to conscious poverty and to weary wealth. In the end a society and its religion tend to fall together, like body and soul, in a harmonious death."

Turning to the mental elements of civilization he says men first transmitted their thoughts by gesture and then by speech. Education was imperative; civilization owes its life to it. The primitive father put his trust in character as modern education has put its trust in intellect; he was concerned to make not scholars but men. Little or no use was made of writing. An

Egyptian legend relates that King Thod denounced it saying:

> "Children and young people who have hitherto been forced to apply themselves diligently to learn and retain whatever was taught, will cease to apply themselves and neglect to exercise their memories."

To the knowledge of letters was added the sciences. Numbers were necessary for trade and the measurement of time by moons probably introduced astronomy. Man even turned to art and adorned his body on a grandiose scale with all the vanity of moderns.

Passing from Anthropology through Archaeology to History he tells us that Champollion came back in I796 with all Egypt past and present in his grasp, and in I872 Schliemann unearthed the youngest of the many cities of Troy. "There are not many things finer in our murderous species than this noble curiosity, this restless and reckless passion to understand."

The first period of human existence was in the stone age. The creature that became man by learning to speak was one of those adaptable species that survived the frozen centuries. In I929, a skull adjudged to be human by such experts as Abbé Breuil and G. Elliot Smith, was found in China, together with traces of fire and stones worked into tools and animal bones ascribed to the Early Pleistocene Epoch a million years ago. The earliest undeniable human fossils, however, are those of a race said to have inhabited France, Belgium, Germany and Spain, and even the shores of Galilee, from 40,000 to 20,000 B.C. These

Neandertial Men were later displaced by the Cro-Magnon race, a people of magnificent vigour and stature. They were cave-men too but there is no proof that caves were their only dwelling place. It may be a jest of time that only those who lived in caves, or died in caves, have bequeathed their bones to archaeology. They were short but had a cranial capacity of I600 cubic centimetres - which is 200 more than ours. It was they who survived and became the chief progenitor of the modern western European. About 75,000 B.C. the Acheuleans are said to have lived in Europe, Greenland, North America, Africa, the Near East, India and China, They developed the coup-de-poing to greater symmetry and produced hammers, anvils, scrapers, planes, arrow-heads and knives. By 20,000 B.C. needles were made of bone and many things were carved or engraved on reindeer's horn. Bowls were filled with burning grease for light by the Cro-Magnons. Man-made fire is at least 40,000 years old. It made inedible foods edible by cooking and led finally to the fusion of metals - the only real advance in technology from Cro-Magnon days to the Industrial Revolution. Drawings of reindeers, mammoths, horses, boars, etc., found in caves in Spain, date back to I6,000 B.C. and similar ones in France are only of slightly later date. Perhaps after the discovery and employment of copper it was centuries before men made bronze but the latter is found in Cretan remains of 3,000 B.C., in Egyptian remains of 2,800 B.C., and in the second city of Troy, 2,000 B.C.

It is one of the anomalies of history that iron was so long delayed despite its abundance. The Mound Builders appear to have made their weapons of meteoric iron but the oldest wrought iron is found in Palestine and dated at I,350 B.C. Greatest of all steps in the transmission of civilization was writing. It probably originated as a ceramic art. The clay used by the builder and the sculptor probably was also used by the scribe. The Cuneiform writing of Mesopotamia logically followed. The North American Indian and the Mediterranean world at the end of the Neolithic age seem to have used drawings to narrate their exploits. By 3600 B.C., and probably before, Elam, Sumeria and Egypt had developed their thought pictures or hieroglyphics. These were subsequently used to mean syllables or letters. Such alphabets date from 3,000 B.C. in Egypt and I,600 B.C. in Crete.

Perhaps we know of only a minority of the civilizations that have existed. There are legends about many that have passed away leaving no history. Recent discoveries in Crete, Sumeria and Yucatan show us that. The Pacific contains the ruins from at least one lost race and the raised bottom of the middle Atlantic supports Plato's legend of Atlantis, an island civilization between Europe and Asia, unless the reference is to America and the old and new worlds were in contact in neolithic times and Columbus only rediscovered America.

The first country he deals with is Elam. The

district north of the Persian gulf and east of the Tigris, is one of the first historic civilizations and reveals an advanced culture as old as 4,500 B.C. Emerging from a nomad life the Elamites had copper weapons and tools. They cultivated grains and domesticated animals, possessed hieroglyphic writing and business documents, mirrors and jewelry and a trade that reached from Egypt to India. There is found the oldest record of the potter's wheel and the wagon wheel which only appeared later in Babylonia and Egypt, and the central city of Susa which under the name of Shushan survived 6,000 years of history from the zeniths of Sumeria and Babylon to the fourteenth century of our era.

Sumeria is west of Elam. The Greeks, Romans and Jews, whom with a poor sense of the amplitude of time we call "the ancients," never heard of it. At least Herodotus either knew it not or ignored it completely. Yet north and south of the Euphrates the cities of Eridu (now Abu Shahrein), Ur (now Mukayyar), Larsa (Biblical Ellasar; now Senkereh), Lagash (now Shippurla), Nippur (now Niffer) and Nisin, proclaim their history from their graves. At first it seems to have been a struggle of the non-Semitic peoples of Sumeria to preserve their independence against the Semitics from the north. Together these peoples, consciously or otherwise, cooperated to produce the first extensive historical civilization. They were a short stocky people with downward-sloping eyes. Some of the men were

clean-shaven and most of them shaved their upper lip. They dressed in fleece and finely woven wool. Well-to-do women wore soft leather heel-less shoes laced like our own, and bracelets, necklaces, finger-rings and ear-rings declared their husbands' superiority. Considering their civilization old in 2,300 B.C. the poets and scholars tried to reconstruct its ancient history. They wrote of Creation and Paradise and a terrible flood because of the sin of an ancient king. Durant says this passed into Babylonian and Hebrew tradition and became part of the Christian creed. In 1929 there was discovered in the strata above the remains of a prediluvian culture, a layer of silt and clay which would seem to confirm the reality of the flood. From 3,000 B.C. onwards the clay tablets kept by the priests and found in the ruins at Ur tell the history. King Urukagina of Lagash was a royal reformer. Sargon I, a warrior, established the first great empire in history. In 1897 there was discovered at Susa a well carved memorial slab (now a treasure at the Louvre) showing his son Naram-Sin in the horrible pose of a victorious king. The history of wars and wars goes on until Hammurabi, King of Babylon, built his empire. Then for centuries, until the rise of Persia, the Semites were rulers and the history of Sumeria was finished. Sumerian power disappeared but Sumerian civilization lived on for Babylonia enjoyed the heritage. Sumerians had learned the art of irrigation and

cultivated bountiful crops. Oxen drew their plough-shares and seeds were planted with tubular drills, and harvests were threshed with flint-toothed sledges and weaving was a government-controlled industry. Precious metals were used as a standard of value and contracts had to be confirmed in writing and witnessed. Goods were obtained on credit at interest rates from fifteen to thirty-three per cent. Medicine advanced rapidly and a calendar was based on lunar months. Government was in the hands of the kings who went to battle in a chariot leading a motley host armed with bows, arrows and spears. Even then wars were fought for trade routes and goods. Taxes were collected in kind, stored in royal warehouses and distributed as pay to officials and employees of the state. Laws were codified and formed the basis of Hammurabi's famous code but were more humane. Courts of justice were held in the temples and priests presided in the lower courts while professional judges sat in the superior courts. The best element in the system was a public arbitrator whose duty it was to settle difficulties amicably and avoid litigation whenever possible. Gods were innumerable. Every city and every state and every human activity had some inspiring and disciplinary divinity. Their representatives lived in the temples where they were provided by the faithful with revenue, the best of food, and wives. Food and tools were placed in graves so Sumerians must have believed in an after-life. The priests were the

educators and the temples the schools. Boys were taught writing and arithmetic, patriotism and piety, in preparation for the high position of scribe. Tablets were encrusted with tables of multiplication and division, square and cube roots, and exercises in applied geometry. Marriage was a complex institution. The dowry already existed but the bride alone had control of it. Women's rights were at a high peak except in cases of crisis. Children were without legal rights. Writing was well advanced and complex thought in commerce, poetry and religion could be expressed. The oldest inscriptions are on stone and date back to 3,600 B.C. Towards 3,200 the clay tablets were engraved in cuneiform with a stylus, the outstanding contribution of Sumeria to mankind. Pottery though turned on the wheel is mere earthenware uncomparable with the vases of Elam, but goldsmiths did their work admirably. Crude pottery can be contrasted with consumate jewelry in Sumeria.

Though the oldest written records known are Sumerian they do not prove that the first civilisation was Sumerian. Statuettes found in Assyria and the Code of Hammurabi may be copied from Sumeria but they might also have been copied from some predecessor ancestral to them both. Sumeria is too near the beginning of recorded history for certainty, yet the languages of those later countries bear the same relationship to Sumerian that French and Italian bear to Latin. More definite is the relationship of cer-

tain specific elements of Egyptian culture from Sumeria and Babylonia. Seperated by desert from Africa, it is natural that Egyptian history should be more closely connected to eastern Asia than to Africa. The further back we trace the Egyptian language the more affinities it has with the Semitic tongues of the Near East. The chariot, the potter's wheel, statuettes etc., undoubtedly were gifts from Sumeria. To conclude let Durant use his own unadulterated words.

> "Egypt could well afford to concede the priority of Sumeria. For whatever the Nile may have borrowed from the Tigris and the Euphrates, it soon forwarded a civilisation specifically and uniquely its own; one of the richest and greatest, one of the most powerful and yet one of the most graceful cultures in history. By its side Sumeria was but a crude beginning; and not even Greece or Rome would surpass it."

The Middle Ages knew of Egypt as a Roman colony and a Christian settlement. The rediscovery of Egypt is one of the most brilliant chapters in archaeology. When Napoleon led an expedition to Egypt in I798 he took with him draughtsmen and engineers to map the terrain, and certain scholars "absurdly interested in Egypt for the sake of a better understanding of history." One of these savants, Champollion, applied himself to the decipherment of hieroglyphics. After twenty years research he succeeded in translating the Rosetta Stone, stumbled on by one of Napoleon's troops near the mouth of the Nile, and discovered the entire Egyptian alphabet. Durant exclaims "It was one of the peaks in the history of history!" When the first flints were unearthed in the valley of the Nile their anti-

quity was never realized but in 1895 DeMorgan revealed an almost continuous gradation of paleolithic cultures progressing from 10,000 to 4,000 B.C. At the later date there is evidence of the cultivation of cereals. Egypt built pyramids for deathlessness, seeking stability by their height, form and position. One stone in Khifu's pyramid weighed 150 tons and a million blocks averaged two and one half tons each. Egypt's zenith saw the great Queen Hatshepsut but this was the beginning of a thousand year struggle with western Asia. Civil and criminal legislation were highly developed and precise, and cases were argued in writing. The kings had large harems to which nobles sometimes contributed their daughters but the status of Egyptian women was exceptionally high, and the Greeks were amazed at their liberty. Hatshesput and Cleopatra rose to be queens and ruled and ruined like kings. Durant says by way of compliment that they were the Americans of antiquity. Libraries were made of writing on papyri rolled and packed in jars, and labeled and arranged on shelves. In one such jar was a story of a shipwrecked sailor, a simple autobiographical fragment, full of life and feeling. The scholars of Egypt were the priests who, far from the turmoil of life, laid the foundations of Egyptian science. According to legend the sciences were invented about 18,000 B.C. by Thoth, the god of Wisdom who composed about 20,000 volumes. The fluctuations of the Nile required measurement and remeasure-

ment of the land. This meant a high degree of calculation and was the origin of geometry. The year was divided into seasons according to the average rise and fall of this mighty river. Relatively however, in the study of the human body, poor progress was made despite the opportunities for learning offered by embalming. Yet they recognized the heart to be the driving power of the body, and declared that wherever the doctor laid his hand he met with the heart. From this to Leonardo and Harvey was but a step - which took three thousand years. Some of their doctors were specialists in obstetrics and gynecology; some treated only gastric disorders; some were oculists so internationally famous that Cyrus sent for one of them to come to Persia. The Egyptian enjoyed a great variety of diseases though he had to die without knowing their Greek names. The mummies and papyri tell of many diseases common to-day. Pyorrhea and dental caries, absent in the oldest mummies, become frequent in the later ones, indicating the progress of civilization. The greatest element, though, was art. Here almost at the threshold of history, we find an art powerful and mature, superior to that of any modern nation and equalled only by that of Greece. Our whole theory of progress hesitates before Egyptian art. They were the greatest builders in history and some will say they were also the greatest sculptors. Historians of philosophy are wont to begin with the Greeks, while the Hindus think they invented it and the

Chinese believe they perfected it, but among the most ancient fragments of the Egyptians are writings that belong, however loosely and untechnically, under the rubric of moral philosophy. Now, though the sands have destroyed the body of ancient Egypt, through the Phoenicians, the Syrians, and the Jews, through the Cretans, the Greeks, and the Romans, the civilization of Egypt passed down to become part of the cultural heritage of mankind. Faure has said that Egypt, through the solidarity, the unity, and the disciplined variety of its artistic products, through the enormous duration and the sustained power of its effort, offers the spectacle of the greatest civilization that has yet appeared on earth. We shall do well to equal it.

This 'Story of Civilization' does not stop at Egypt but continues with its interesting details for another thousand pages. It turns to Babylonia and Assyria, and the Indo-Europeans and Semites of the Near East, Judea and Persia to their conquest by Alexander, recording the cultural history, the economic and political organization, the science and art, the religion and morals, the literature and philosophy, and the customs and manners. It narrates the history of civilization in India from the Vedas to Gandhi, in China from Confucius to Chiang Kai-shek, and in Japan from the earliest times to the present day. The rapid succession of interesting details continues throughout and we are sorry we must leave the historian here, but

we have sampled his product and made his acquaintance, and we know that whenever we wish to visit him again he will provide great amusement and much food for thought that will fill many leisure hours.

AS AN ECONOMIST

Although Newman has denied the right of the plough-man to criticize the prime minister, pseudo-economists continue to usurp the privilege. Durant himself tells us that infallible national policies are proffered by everyone from college professors to grocers' boys. The world, however, does not lend its ears to every nostrum but when a college professor enunciates his theory it is received with more consideration than the grocery boy's. When it also comes from the pen of a well known author and master stylist, it is assured of reaching a large percentage of the thinking public.

How many subjects, we stop and ask ourselves, are more important than political economy ? Durant has pointed out that the world is inclined to treat it as the science of wealth rather than the science of welfare, and his observation seems true indeed when we see how often it is forgotten that it is subject to Ethics. It is a science concerned only with man's temporal good, of course, but it must bow to the science dealing with man's eternal and spiritual interests. Truth can not oppose truth and therefore political economy can countenance no political doctrine that denies or defies the laws of God.

Since man first began to govern society he has clumsily attempted to regulate it but has done so in vain. Though he can attack the problems of physics with the most astonishing success, and probe the mysteries of meta-

physics with the greatest sagacity, Political Economy's laws of physical certitude have remained as obscure as the occult dialects of the earth's primitive men. No one ever planted them; like Topsy they just grew. Or is that not taking too much for granted ? The laws of physics are fixed and real; it is simply necessary to determine and understand them. The laws of metaphysics are more profound and difficult of ascertainment but nonetheless real. But the laws of economics are man's responsibility. They must first be created before they can be understood. As yet he has only subjected himself to economic anarchy which he calls 'Capitalism' and viewing the dilemma and chaos retrospectively he visualizes laws. Before we enter this subject let us recognize that its structure is in jeopardy. It is man's field, man's mission, and man's work. We can not expect it to compare with the works of God. That is why it has lagged behind the other sciences.

Let us now review Will Durant's contribution- 'A Programme for America.'

From his travels across the United States he has found that behind the surface of optimism and public cheerfulness of the industrial, political and educational leaders with whom he has conversed, there lies a profound pessimism and timid surrender. The thing to do, they say, is nothing. The economic law - viz, industrial ambition and greed - will sometime set the wheels turning again and

any intellectual interference with this instinctive process will confuse it.

He asks the reader to accompany him on a mental trip across America and to take an inventory of the recognized deficiencies and assets of the national life before considering what might be done. He declares his prescription will contain nothing very original and the reader will find the conclusions are disturbingly moderate and startlingly unrevolutionary. "Perhaps," he says, "when all the elements of our life lie scattered about us in disarray we can best analyze and understand."

Consider the American scene. All the commercial, industrial and scenic wealth can not be ignored. Even in its poverty the nation is wealthy with its rich rolling land, comfortable homes, well-kept farms, and new automobiles. Despite these blessings, though, are the steel towns of the eastern states. There is nothing so horrible in all the rest of America. The author's heart is deeply touched as he contemplates how some men must toil that others may enjoy life, and he dreams of the day when tides will be harnessed for power and men will no longer be required to suffer their drudgery in the bowels of the earth.

Always displaying an aesthetic mind, and a keen lover of music, he becomes disgusted as he found and wrote: "In the majestic Ambassador Hotel where tuxedoed heroes and low-cut heroines dance, the orchestra is playing

the cheapest music it has been able to find in all America.

A cosmopolitan and a lover of mankind he turns in dismay to the motley conglomeration of peoples that is known as the United States. Like other Americans he had hoped that his country could assimilate and absorb the people of all nations but now he regrets that he has found all things do not mix. "We thought that we were mingling these varieties into a people but the war of 1914 and the election of 1928 disclosed the depth of our divisions and the intensity of our sectarian loyalties." The melting pot is not working.

Of course one would expect to find him objecting to the lower classes not being allowed to practise birth control while the upper classes restrict their number. He views it as society breeding at the bottom and dying at the top. "The average American is not improving; in fact there seems to be a growing coarseness of feature and it would be blasphemy to say these men and women are made in the image of God."

Then agriculture is bankrupt. Soil once fertile has been abused by careless tilling and in some places has been abandoned. It has fallen into the hands of listless tenants, unattached to it by any sentiment or hope, who now work over one half. The city has sucked in the ambitious.

There they are worse off. Our industrial

system has broken down. Men of industry are not caught like the farmer in a web of dependency but the immense proceeds of invention, scientific management, and mass production, have gone mostly to the investing class, and wages, though more generous in the United States than anywhere else, have not risen, nor prices fallen, in proportion to the rising productivity, since our producers do not pay the full equivalent back again to the consumer.

He complains that democracy is a failure with its excess of wire-pulling and lack of sane trade legislation. "The art of municipal government has seldom sunk lower than in America to-day."

Cultural life has become superficial and vulgar. America trains the best salesmen and the worst governors on earth and literature has become journalism. Perhaps the writers are too well paid: it is difficult to write slowly at fifty cents per word. "Literature is like love: it rises from longing unfulfilled, it thrives on hardship and denial, and dies in realization and security. A happy nation has no literature: a satisfied lover writes no poetry." Worst of all, perhaps, is that moral life is in chaos. Democracy and prohibition are sources of crime and the sole content of American liberalism is that a man shall be free to drink.

Lastly, he says civilization is dying. "Once religion loses its hold, even on the upper crust of society,

morals begin to disintegrate."

Then having outlined the failures he turns to the achievements - to present the case for the defendant, as he calls it. By adding the good to the bad we shall come a little closer than either the optimist or the pessimist to that baffling contradiction which is fact.

The United States has faced an unprecedented problem in the freedom and variety allowed by its immigration laws. One forgets how long it took other nations to reconcile their elements. Furthermore the resources of the soil have been developed with unprecedented rapidity and energy. It is no longer virgin but it still produces from one half to three quarters of the world's supply of food and raw materials.

"In the reduction of poverty the world has been outdistanced. In Periclean Greece, in Renaissance Italy, in the great France of the Enlightenment, education was the privilege of the few and poverty was the lot of the rest. In our unhappy country poverty is the lot of the few and education is the privilege of the rest. Is it quite certain that we have made the poorer choice ? After all there is something to be said for a country in which half the diseases are due to over-eating." Democracy has failed in our cities but it has succeeded in our lives. American materialism is shared by the world more readily than its generosity. He is proud of his belief that America has done

more for her children than any nation in history and he feels the moral laxity is but the passing price of industrial transformation. New York already equals any old world city in many respects.

His prescription is, as he says, very simple. It merely amounts to raising the standard of society by raising the standard of men. It is based, as we might have guessed, on his often-quoted words of Confucius. He would educate society according to his ideas in 'Mansions of Philosophy.'

This prescription is hardly economic and certainly smacks more of philosophy, but there are, it seems, two types of economist which are found everywhere. One recognizes what is wrong with the world and the other does not. A third type with the ability to remedy seems absent. We must admit Durant to the first class because he is aware first that the ethical condition of a strong moral framework is in peril, and secondly that the material difficulty consists of a monstrous disconnection in our system which prevents the industrial system from paying out in wages and dividends sufficient purchasing power to buy back the products of industry. We may suggest that these two factors are the paramount and all-overshadowing causes of universal distress. One is denounced from every pulpit; the other has been disclosed by the great economist C.H.Douglas. Durant has comprehended them both. We respect his analysis.

On the other hand his synthesis we reject,- not its end but its means. He has admitted the necessity of religion and sought to build up society without it. With apology for our dogmatic conviction we most emphatically declare that it can not be done.

THE ESSAYIST

If Will Durant exercises any influence on philosophy, literary criticism, history or economics, his most powerful vehicle of expression is the essay. One of the peculiar features of our age is that most people are too busy with the ordinary things of life to read large philosophic volumes, while on the other hand, those who have the time have not the money. It is not that way with magazines. They retail at small prices and there is scarcely a home which they do not enter as regularly as the daily papers. The United States provides for them an immense field - roughly 120 million people and the most cosmopolitan mixture the world has ever known. Born by freedom and struggling to be different from all the rest of the universe, they are a people united by no common culture but rather divided by every religion under the sun. As a general principle they oppose all traditions as limitations on liberty and flaunt their own great achievements as adequate proof of the superfluity of customs and regulations. Too well they have absorbed the idea of Rousseau and Jefferson that the best government is one that governs least. Probably no other people in the history of civilization disobeyed the laws of God and man with such freedom but in spite of all this that country has risen in a century and a half to become one of the greatest nations among the nations and has produced geniuses comparable to any of their contemporaries the world over. In fact some of these have been their most

adamant atheists and in the realms of science and thought there are persons who are wont to regard these men as great because of their paganism rather than in spite of it. They credit them with having, by the industry and skill of the human mind, moulded a mighty nation that achieved as much in its infancy as the rest of the world has achieved since Creation. They forget that the United States is constructed upon the heritage of all mankind. They ignore that it is the product of Christians as well as of heathens, and that all that is good in it is Christian, and all that is wrong is the absence of Christianity. They do not realize how much better work their pagans would have done were they inspired by Christianity, and lastly they fail to see, amid all the distress, that the work has not been well done. Such is the field wherein Durant sows his seeds. Let us turn to his 'Essay on Morals' which appeared in Saturday Evening Post.

Morals, like laws, were invented for our neighbours, he says. Being old and tired he feels fit to take a philosophical view of morality, and at the outset he hastens to explain that the immorality of the audience and the perfection of the speaker are not assumed, and he admits making most of the mistakes he here proposes to denounce.

Thrasymachus declared "might is right ... and justice is the interest of the stronger," and Yang Chu argued at some length that wickedness is much wiser than

virtue and is more likely to be rewarded with honour and wealth. Kautilya, Machiavelli, and Stendhal have posed as believers in like ideas but seemingly without sincerity probably because they misconceived the very meaning and function of morality - which is not to bring material emoluments to virtue but to organise individual character and social order into that unity, coherence and strength without which neither the individual nor society could survive. The individualistic instincts of acquisition, pugnacity and power, are older and stronger than the impulse to cooperation; and the social instincts of mate, hunger and parental care, though they may be turned to the support of social order, contain in themselves the root of disorderly passion, and that familial selfishness which makes the average parent ready to sacrifice the universe for his child. The basic problem of society is to find some means of strengthening the social, and controlling the individual instincts of its members, lest it disintegrate into chaos and die of disruptive strife. A moral code is therefore a biological necessity. Even though morals vary from place to place social order is nonetheless necessary; the game of life must still have rules in order to be played. Sooner or later the disturbing realization comes to us that even that which we can not understand may be true.

Society has used three instruments for strengthening the social instincts and building a moral code:

the family, the church, and the school.

The family is the only moral institution recognized by nature. It is a cooperative isle in an individualistic sea. The Chinese, who have been, all in all the wisest and most moral people in history, considered the family far more important than the state, and thought little of revolutions and changing dynasties so long as parental authority and mutual aid still flourished in the home. Confucius laid it down that a man must regulate himself first in order to regulate his family and finally his state. "Let the family be so regulated," says Durant, "and it will give forth such spontaneous morality that no multitude of artificial laws will any longer be required to keep the state in proper order: let the state be in such natural and proper order and all the world will be peaceful and happy."

Next to the family the most powerful prop of morality has been religion. In our youth we think of religion as an assemblage of ideas; in our old age we perceive how subordinate these ideas are to the functions that religion fulfills in the individual and the state. Religion was formerly conceived as an ideal: now it is thought to be only an expedient for controlling human passions. Hence statesmen have courted and favoured it, lavishing wealth upon it like Rameses, attributing their victories to it like Ashurbanipal, building perfect temples for it like Pericles, allying themselves with it like Charlemagne; and even proud

rebels like Ashoka and Akbar, Constantine and Peter, Napoleon and Mussolini, have made their peace with it, lest the order forged by their arms should be undone by the loosening of morals and the decay of faiths.

Until our generation the school, or rather the teacher, was also a vital aid to the moral life. Education used to imply a transmission not just of knowledge but of morals. Boys were sent to Eton and Harrow, not to be turned into intellectual giants, but to be beaten into decency, to be equipped with disciplined as well as furnished minds; and when they were passed on to Oxford, Cambridge or Edinburgh, it was in the hope that they would become not merely scholars but gentlemen. These products captured half the world and won the respect even of their enemies for their strength of character, maturity of manners, and clarity of minds. Perhaps our ancestors were right.

All these traditional sanctions or aids of the moral code have been weakened by that Mississippi of inventions which we call the Industrial Revolution. The economic basis of the family has been destroyed. The power of the father, shorn of its economic source, visibly declines; and the ability of the family to discipline will into character and greed into cooperation has been so reduced that morality may be said to have lost its instinctive and biological base. Now legislation multiplies but laws do not reach the soul.

To turn the tide will be difficult. It is not that we are immoral but unmoral. We hover unsteadily between the agricultural-rural moral code of our forefathers and the industrial-urban moral code of our grandchildren. We can only guess at the morality our children must forge, and if we venture to discuss the code before it is born we had better remember that our ideals are a product of our rearing and may be the voice of the past rather than the forward guidance of tomorrow.

Morality might be strengthened in the individual by strengthening courage,- by developing hardiness and health; a fit and ready body is a sturdy prop to self-respect, confidence and fortitude. We might again select teachers for character as well as scholarship and beg them to give less attention to dead languages and more to the training of the will by example and practice. Parents might cease to undo, by neglect and bad manners in the home, the constructive work of the schools. Perhaps a code of honour embodying the principles of morality and decency needed in modern industrial life, drawn up and periodically revised, might be taught in every school from kindergarten to Ph.D., engraved on every diploma, and sworn to at every graduation.

We must mitigate our acceptance of corruption and our admiration for violence. Let the churches speak out and take the lead as they have done in construc-

tively in the matter of films. Schools for government as in ancient Egypt would raise political life, and a war on slums would reduce the birth-rate of crime.

The regulation of the sexes requires the bridging of the gap between physical and economic maturity. Perhaps it can be lessened by restoring the old institution of the dowry and applying it to sons and daughters alike. To strengthen morals in marriage one might begin with the wedding itself, and build up about it once more, a solemn ceremony that would burn the event emotionally into the memory of the couple, and make them feel their troth as no longer a contract but again a vow. Perhaps the development of electric power may result in the decentralisation of industry once again and the home will recapture some of its lost utility. It should be laid down as a basic principle that marriage will not recapture its health until woman again is an economic asset to her mate. The functionless wife is the greatest enemy of marriage. Biologists have not yet found any escape from the alternative of work or degeneration. The management of a home should be considered an art as difficult and honourable as typing letters or connecting telephones; the woman who can cook, iron and sew, and knows how to make her home cosy and neat, is an ornament to life, and should be ranked high in society. If in addition she can bear healthy children and rear them into robust citizens she deserves a degree as exalted as any in

the land. The normal woman is inclined to motherhood, though she does not wish it to be the sole concern of her life; she rightly insists upon sufficient leisure and education to make her the cultural equal and companion of her mate. Given such biological marriage - the union of mates to make children finer than themselves - and all the myriad difficulties of matrimony become merely the problems and irritations that naturally accompany any vital enterprise.

Now that the sermon is over, he says, the preacher comes down from the pulpit, mingles with the congregation, and discovers that they are not such a bad lot after all. Even those who have not come to hear him, and those who justly consider him a reactionary in these matters, may be something less than criminals. Our race may be taking an epochal step upward in the very midst of its chaos and uncertainty. If, while hardly knowing it, we are engaged in this process of lengthening adolescence, we may be unwittingly climbing a step higher in the advancement of mankind.

Let us take advantage of our broken life to repiece its fragments into a finer harmony than before. Nothing is lost; everything may yet be won.

As a summation of this treatise on morals we might well epitomize his Essay 'Is Civilization Dying?' Civilization is not suffering from senility: it is merely experiencing growing pains.

CONCLUSION

He has won his way into our literature with that powerful personality that captured the hearts of his Jesuit tutors as must be inferred from 'Transition.' Although we only know him as Will Durant the author, we too have felt his spell. We have reviewed his books but avoided his biographies for we are prying into no secrets of his life and have no desire to explore what is none of our business. We accept only what he himself chooses to reveal, though, by the frankness with which he writes, we judge he is confiding everything one might rightfully be interested in ascertaining. Keeping in mind that our subject is Will Durant the author we are not concerned with his influence as a man but we are disturbed about his influence as a writer. Yet we do not propose to meddle with his beliefs or non-beliefs, and, though we would act with more right if we did so, we do not seek to save literature for Christianity, but we do seek to discover the influence of our writer on the religious principles of the world. We must know are supports are strong for they are all-important. Any writer wielding so powerful an influence over so vast a continent must not be ignored. When his works are meritorious they deserve praise and when deleterious they require counteraction. Certainly they command attention.

It has been our purpose to select and present his ideas as consisely and plainly as possible. It is our

hope that not clothed by the brilliance of his personality they will appear, in so much as they are noxious, impotent in their nakedness. If we have accomplished that much we have not worked in vain in our struggle to appreciate this author, and, however small our contribution, we shall have helped to alleviate the task of refutation which we must leave to better trained, more skilled, and maturer minds.

Until now we have been dealing with his matter but what shall we say about his style ? As we attempt to measure the latter we face our dilemma. We are confounded by the absence of any measuring scale. It is one of the penalties of being British that there is no English Academy. British tradition preserves the empire it creates because it is malleable rather than brittle. Any one is entitled to attempt to change its form, and the nation trusts that this elasticity will ensure strength and stability in its national culture and growing spirit. Precedents in laws are held sacred when established by parliaments and judges; precedents in letters are honoured when introduced by authors and critics. The result is peace, tranquility and understanding, but the price is uniformity, precision and certainty. Dictionaries supply a multitude of spellings and a swamp of pronunciations for the same words, and vie with each other over the authenticity and advisability of their choices. Alas, in the United States, even newspapers vivisect our language to reduce the cost of

paper and ink, and relieve the strain on reporters' erudition. The result is disorder and confusion, ignorant pedantry, and bunctuous didacticism. By what standard then can a man's English be valuated ? Probably only by a stocktaking of its parts.

Durant's vocabulary is admirable. Only by a life of study could he attain such mastery over so vast an array of colourful words, scientific terms, and foreign adaptations. He declares he writes with difficulty and patience and succeeds best when all those who love him (possess him) are asleep. He must write with care and patience indeed, for he can almost always be trusted to arrange the proper word in its proper place. Due to the variety of his researches his knowledge of terms is so extensive that very few persons could read one of his volumes thoroughly without recourse to an encyclopaedic dictionary. His sentences are, however, frequently more utilitarian than classical. They begin with "ands" and "buts" and do not always include a verb. Such a method allows utmost continuity of thought and gives some force to every word. The variety of the sentences preserves the form but it is the power of antithesis and balance which raises it to genius. Coupled with the device of finding an authority for every preposterous statement the work becomes particularly interesting reading, and the multitude of sources secure the further result of allowing the author's own ideas to rest

slyly hidden behind the shield of other names. This subtlety is probably sponsored by his humour which plays so important a part through all his works. There is scarcely a page, even in his philosophy of despair, that is not brightened by a spirit of fun. Narrating his experience with a fair friend he says: "She had assured me on various occasions that I had all the earmarks of a genius, including those which Lombroso had listed as common to geniuses and idiots." Referring to the Rocky Mountains he tells that Disraeli thought they would divide America into two countries, and remarks that Disraeli knew more about canals than he did about railways. On the other hand his artistry predominates in tragedy. It has been seen how all his works are steeped in remorse and 'Transition' reaches to melodrama. After reading one of these books for the first time one feels it ends in a void, for from a description of the darkest gloom and despair it ascends to an artifical optimism which does not completely convince, and the reader is left with the feeling that another chapter should yet be written. While this is attributable to his subject matter, it is a circumstance that all the brilliance of style can not conceal. He seems to be recognized by the public in general as the great cynic, and all the hope he develops so courageously is passed over unnoticed. The human mind finds it much easier to analyze than to reconstruct, and therefore the destructive charges of a meaningless world, linger in our thoughts

long after all man-made plans have been forgotten. These books take for granted that almost all the world has lost religion like the author, a premise that is far from true, and in consequence they are repudiated by the majority of readers as unlogical, while they are read for the entertainment of their novelty. Certainly this cynicism and despondency is unjustified as surely as there is a God in Heaven ! Perhaps philosophers will be his severest critics and say of him as he said of Mark Twain: "A little philosophy is a dangerous thing and inclineth a man's mind to pessimism." Although he himself is desperately anxious to be mistaken about the permanence of death he has formulated his plans for society without regard for the guiding principle of life. It would be a temporal but rational world trusting entirely in the goodness of man. One is left amazed by such implicit faith on the part of a writer who realizes himself that supernatural beliefs have played an indispensable part in developing the best that is in man. This credulity in the goodness of man assumes fantastic magnitude when one observes the state of this world despite all the ministrations of Christianity, and one is inclined to ask how we could survive without them. When we have thus reflected for a while we begin to wonder if these books of Durant are really tarred with unjustified cynicism or painted with unwarranted optimism. Probably it is the mixture of the two that determines his true style. Both

elements are found in all his work and determine all his criticisms. He frankly admits that he is a hero worshipper and almost all his personages are selected for their subjective interest. They appeal to him by their actions of revolt and their courage in success or defeat. He criticizes them all in this same light. If thought and style were not inseparable we would acclaim this delightful power of language as one of the finest contributions that America has made to literature, but unfortunately matter is married to form and it is beyond our power to divorce them.

We must accept his works as a whole. His influence radiates from the matter as well as from the form. It extends over all the continent and impresses all readers in greater or lesser degree. From orthodox philosophers it quite naturally excites nothing more than a refutation and on those of wider views the tendency is not to follow but to cecade, but how many people are philosophers ? Magazines are read by a cross-section of any populace and what percentage of any cross-section knows its own limitations ? Even as we write, we feel a liking for Will Durant. Though he laughs at our institutions we accept his good humour and repay it with sympathy for his lost faith. We do not become incensed but instead we try to understand when he writes:

"The hardest question of all to answer is - what help does religion give me ? As I write this query down I look out of the moving window and see, in the valley below, a little hamlet gathered

> about a church. I can imagine what incredible theological nonsense is preached under that white spire, what bigotry and sectarianism are nourished there, and with what terror and hatred these simple toilers of the soil will defend the faith that so solicitiously protects them from our passing truth. But my heart goes out to them; I think I like them better than the village atheist who knows so well how to say the right thing at the wrong time. To be in haste to destroy the faith of such people is surely the work of a shallow and ungenerous mind."

If he had ruined our faith we could hardly feel the same good will, but that he has not succeeded in doing. Instead our reaction has been a stronger belief. We have explored and exhausted the ideas of a non-believer and they have failed to convince. Before we were awed by a Creator making a universe out of nothing: now we are astonished by men believing a universe could be made out of nothing without a Creator. It has become clear that the mystery of theology is not half as mysterious as the mystery of atheism. Paradoxical as it may seem, the non-believer appears as the most credulous of men.

We have presented a case the verdict of which must finally be against Will Durant. Yet he has captured our hearts and it would have been difficult, not to say un-christian, to have condemned him strongly. He has presented the facts himself and in this thesis they have merely been collected and passed on. We have chosen to make use almost exclusively of the all-important question of the Supreme Being, and we have carefully omitted many of the less important little references which have been used to spurn religion.

We disdain to write a diatribe against any man, and particularly desire to be most fair, and if necessary most lenient, to those with whom we differ most. Underneath all this altruism, however, is a more self-servient reason. We seek to preserve Durant's gentleness with all its disarming suavity. We desire to show how easily he gains the confidence of his public. Wickham says he is credited with popularizing heavy reading and doubts that much credit is deserved for such an accomplishment. Be that an advantage or disadvantage, brilliant style makes an exceptionally attractive cloak for sombre philosophic ideas and unorthodox economic doctrines. The unfortunate part of literature is that so few readers are capable of determining the truth beneath the words, and when a writer has achieved the art of colourful simplicity he has extended his field a hundred fold. An eminent Canadian scientist said when he was shown the 'Story of Philosophy:' "That is too deep for me. I want something light." This criticism was in marked contrast to the words of a school-boy who, gazing wide-eyed at the thousand page volume 'The Story of Civilisation,' first remarked: "That is a pretty big book," but after reading a page or two exclaimed "Why it is easy! I thought at first a college education would be needed to understand it." Observation goes in advance; comprehension may lide far behind. When untrained minds are exposed to such books they become a real danger and can hardly be

read with security. Unless one is familiar with and enthusiastic about other philosophy, the probability is that Durant's will be accepted at its expensive price.

If Durant enunciated any elaborate system grounded on non-belief and constructed with a flagrant disregard for the teachings of Christ and the rights of man, it would present little resistance to refutation. Such, though, is not the case. He is not a philosopher for he originates nothing in that line and neither does he accept nor support the principles of any other philosopher in their entirety. Likewise he is not an economist. He presents no great plan for restoring prosperity and reestablishing the down-and-out man. First, last and always he remains a student. He is forever searching the annals of man for those things which he feels are worthy of repetition and application. At one point he is worshipping Confucius or Buddha and at the next he may be admiring Christ. One minute he may be resigned to the disintegrating morality, and at the next decrying the popularity of pornography and obscene literature. In the same chapter he aligns himself with birth-control and preaches against the emptyness of childless marriages. Honesty he still reveres, promiscuity he deplores, and at divorce he looks askance. He may have repudiated Christianity but he still honours most of its precepts. He is still thrilled with the ecstasy of life and continues to marvel for its meaning. Perhaps some day

he will discover it.

His works are characterized from the beginning of the first to the end of the last by the deepest feeling of humanity. We can boast of no writer marked by more kindliness. Few men have ever been wounded by his pen because even in his attacks the words are tempered by a more than adequate comprehension of the good that is in others. How many men have learned like he to honour the commandment to love thine enemies ? The reader appreciates him more when he says of a friend "He too must be in paradise now, poor fellow," than for an attack on an enemy. The spirit of peace and good will raises him to just classification in accord with the description given by Cardinal Newman who even made provision for non-believers in describing the gentleman.

> "If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large minded to ridicule religion or to act against it. ... He is a friend of religious toleration, and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling, which is the attendant on civilisation."

> "Sometimes he acknowledges the being of God, sometimes he invests an unknown principle or quality with the attributes of perfection. And this deduction of his reason, or creation of his fancy, he makes the occasion of such excellent thoughts, and the starting-point of so varied and systematic a teaching, that he even seems like a disciple of Christianity itself."

> "Such are some of the lineaments of the ethical character, which the cultivated intellect will form, apart from religious principle. They are seen within the pale of the Church and without it, in holy men and in profligate; they form the beau-ideal of

the world; they partly assist and partly distort the development of the Catholic. They may subserve the education of a St. Francis de Sales or a Cardinal Pole; they may be the limits of the contemplation of a Shaftesbury or a Gibbon. Basil and Julian were fellow-students at the schools of Athens; and one became the Saint and Doctor of the Church, the other her scoffing and relentless foe."

Now we must bid farewell to Will Durant. We have enjoyed his company and profited by it as well. Some harsh words have been used but Newman has assured us a gentleman interprets everything for the best. We concluded from our meeting that Durant does not seek to act against religion, and having consulted the Cardinal we understand why Christ and Orientals are treated as on an equal plane. We part but one thought lingers in our mind. Pagan though he be in his beliefs, he is a Christian at heart, and he who would refute Will Durant's philosophy must take a leaf from Durant's book of style and write with the friendly gentleness of Durant. Unless he accomplishes this the refuter will appear less Christian than the refuted.