

they were, sometimes with brutal frankness.

"I toyed with the idea of doing this book as a novel," he said. "But the times were so fantastic and bizarre that no one could believe them in fiction form. How could you fictionalize Mayer as the crybaby he was? He would burst into tears at the most banal situations—a thing as simple as not being invited to a preview. He was very vulnerable emotionally. And again, it was all the result of his insecurity. But that's Hollywood—a big machine that pulled people into its maw and chewed them up."

In spite of his penetrating outlook on movies, Crowther reveals affection and respect for Hollywood, and continues his work as the dean of motion picture critics.

IT WASN'T TOO long ago that Muzak got rolling across the country to soothe customers in restaurants, lathe operators in factories, typists at their desks, and patients in dentists' chairs. But only the wildest imagination could have predicted some of its recent uses.

A florist in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, claims that his flowers have grown straighter, stronger, and more beautiful since he began using Muzak in his greenhouses.

A poultry raiser in East Granby, Connecticut, says his chickens grow fatter listening to dulcet strains, thinner when they hear progressive stuff.

While chickens grow fatter, *Slenderella* finds that the music helps take off human poundage.

But the most comforting news is this: There isn't a single case on record of payola as far as Muzak is concerned.

—JOHN G. FULLER.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 879

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 879 will be found in the next issue.

CXA DFSN COGA BADBSA
LOMSOEA PDMMOB
OM KXAF NDQ PDMMOB
TYDQC CXAG.

—KOSS HDPAHM.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 878

Perhaps the best thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time.

—DEAN ACHESON.

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DOES HISTORY HAVE A FUTURE?



By LOUIS J. HALLE, author of *"Civilization and Foreign Policy"* and other books. Mr. Halle is now serving as visiting professor of international relations at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland.

AS THE nineteenth century passed, men became increasingly conscious of the fact that they were moving through time; conscious of it as they had hardly been at all before. Geological studies, undertaken for the first time, showed how much time the world had already moved through. The history of human societies, and even of mankind as a whole, became a new academic subject. Darwinism gave dramatic evidence that we men had always been on a sort of production line, that we had always been in the making and presumably still were in the making.

The new idea of evolution, which did not remain confined to the natural sciences, gave cause for optimism. Opposed to the nostalgia one felt as the old scenes fell behind, opposed to the insecurity that came from having constantly to face new and unfamiliar situations, was the belief that we were moving through time in the direction of a progressive betterment. We were going up from the ape, up toward the omnipotent superman (in the scientific

eschatology) who was all brain and master of his environment. We were rising out of the jungle toward some eventually perfected civilization in which we would all push buttons for a living. The spectacular development of the physical sciences, just at this time, suggested to our forebears in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that we were, in fact, approaching the point of arrival at last. The station was just around the next bend. My generation, therefore, was raised in the confidence of a linear progress from primitive beginnings to a scientific Utopia that we thought we might live to see. (Our parents used to tell us, in fact, that though they would not live to see it, we would.)

ALREADY, however, the reaction to the concept of a linear progress was building up in the minds of the *fin de siècle* intellectuals—men like Henry and Brooks Adams, like Oswald Spengler. Concerned with the life of the mind and the spirit, they saw the increasing vulgarization of our age, an expression of mass democracy with its materialism, its sordid or trivial preoccupations, its spiritual rootlessness, its lack of any cultivated inner discipline, and its consequent instability. The imminent passing of the *Pax Britannica*, under which order had been kept throughout the world; the rise of undomesticated new empires in Germany and Japan; the rise of a still uncouth

America; and the decreasing power of the cultivated "governing classes" everywhere—all these tendencies gave rise to the plausible notion that our civilization, like the classical Greco-Roman civilization before it, was in the decline that would lead to its fall. A renewal of the Dark Ages was freely predicted and, with Spengler and Toynbee, the cyclical concept of history, the concept that it repeated itself in cycles, came to replace the concept of a linear progress in the common mind.

NOW the cyclical concept of history, too, has had its day in fashion and has fallen into the disdain that always awaits yesterday's fashions. It has moved from the realm of "what we now know" into the realm of "what people used to believe."

What has replaced it? What is it that we now know? Where have we at last arrived in our thinking?

The clearest answer may be found, I think, in the view advanced by E. H. Carr in the first of the lectures he delivered in 1951 (and which were later published as "The New Society"). What has replaced the cyclical concept is the concept of cultural relativism. There is no objective pattern in history. The pattern that the historian thinks he sees in it is the product of his own mind, which has been conditioned by the circumstances of his time and place. The sky isn't really