

Comment by the Editor

ONE YEAR

No one place is precisely like any other locality. Of the innumerable stars in the heavens each has a distinct identity. Worlds, continents, mountains, cities, trees, and insects — all differ from the others of their kind. People are as various as they are numerous. No two things or beings are quite alike, yet each possesses resemblances that save phenomena and species from utter chaos of particularity. With all the harmony of confusion, there is infinite variety in the order of nature.

History is concerned with the rhythm of events. Though time and place and personality are eternally mutable in their manifestations, there is in the affairs of men a general scheme of repetition. In the multiplicity of incidents, sequence and significance are discovered. As the material world is a perpetually unfinished mosaic of similar yet different forms, so human experience weaves unceasingly a complex pattern of familiar deeds against a background of strange circumstances. Always separate yet ever parallel, the lives of people derive meaning from the unifying factors of locality and date.

According to the formula of place, the scope of history is as extensive as the area of the region selected. Herodotus and Wells reviewed the world; while a modern Machiavelli might describe the march of time within the bounds of a simple village. Biography and the chronicles of great epochs are common forms of history circumscribed by time. To portray the principal events of a single year in the history of Iowa is to recognize the limits of both duration and space.

Out of the maze of occurrences, from the jungle of news, amid the complexity of motives and the diversity of opinions, some salient features of life in Iowa during 1934 appear. Dominant conditions, general trends, and significant events can be discerned. Through the intricate detail of personal daily accomplishment, the pattern of social achievement is formed. The character of the Commonwealth was permanently affected by the triumphs and tragedies of last year.

"One year", said Edward Gibbon, "is no contemptible portion of this mortal existence."

J. E. B.