

## Comment by the Editor

### *THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE PRESENT*

History may be regarded as a continual process of converging and diverging forces. Before every event is a long sequence of causal factors. Some trivial circumstance may alter the course of great events; and yet whatever does transpire is inevitably conditioned by its antecedents. James Harlan was not predestined to defend the policies of President Grant, but in the background of his career may be found the causes of his action. From myriad influences of heredity and environment emerged the musical talent of Hope Glenn. And who can estimate the consequences of the settlement of Iowa by people who hoped to found a Commonwealth in which their children would be proud to live. Between the diversity of causes and effects is an interval of unity in person, time, and place.

Any particular moment and place may be a focal point in history. Innumerable trains of events extending far into the past culminate in a particular episode or condition. And each situation becomes in turn a dynamic impulse which generates a multitude of forces. That the causa-

tion of human conduct is multiple seems no more axiomatic than that many consequences flow from a single circumstance.

Indeed, the course of history is a manifold repetition of the biological process. Countless ancestors produce the individual whose progeny multiply through endless generations. In a comparable phenomenon the roots of a tree merge into the trunk and the trunk divides into branches and twigs. Lines coming from infinity meet at a point and extend on into infinity. Rays of light passing through the lens of the eye create an image of an object which engenders comprehension of things that are and are to be. Men reason both inductively and deductively.

Is this eternal striving to realize the particular from the general and to generalize from the particular a universal formula? Then there is no ultimate end. Does history prove this secret of creation?

J. E. B.