

dog unchained to any metaphysical kennel." This did not mean, any more than with Plato, that he did not have pronounced metaphysical views. He only believed that the flux of things was too varied to be caught within the net of any single formula; that some of the most opposed philosophies had each of them some vision of at least an aspect of the truth.

Although some of the answers suggested by Cohen to the problems of the philosophy of history are admirably provisional, others have important consequences. He views with suspicion the idea of laws peculiar to history, of the type which asserts an invariant series of stages comparable to the stages in the growth of an organism. Nevertheless he holds that a conception of causation as equivalent to the sum of necessary and sufficient conditions is an indispensable idea in history. This view results in what Cohen calls the "linkage of human events" and is directly opposed to the theory which holds that history consists of a series of isolated facts. The Cambridge ancient, medieval, and modern histories were constructed on the latter assumption, and the various sections of it were accordingly handed over for writing to historians of many shades of opinion. The facts they reported were assembled by the board of editors very much as if they were a jig-saw puzzle. But since there was no dominant point of view, no attempt to link the events, the parts of the histories never fell into a consistent pattern. From Cohen's position this type of historical writing, whatever else it might be, was not history.

Cohen retired from New York City College in 1938, with plans for the publication of ten books. Before his death in 1947 two of them had appeared, *A Preface to Logic* (1944) and *The Faith of a Liberal* (1946). *The Meaning of Human History* is the first to be printed posthumously and six or seven more are projected. The scrupulous editorial care given to the present work is assurance that the succeeding volumes in the hands of the same editor will meet the meticulous standards that Cohen himself never failed to apply.

HUNTINGTON CAIRNS.

*Secretary, Treasurer, and General Counsel,  
National Gallery of Art.*

THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FAMILY. By Ernest R. Groves and Gladys Hoagland Groves. Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1947. Pp. 838. \$4.50.

This is an absorbing, well-written, comprehensive, carefully documented volume, perhaps a bit overwhelming in its wealth of detail and thoroughness of execution. In 1934 the authors published *The American Family*, of which this book is a rewritten edition.

The object of the book is "to give the reader an understanding of American family life that will help him to handle his own problems whether they are associated with pre-marriage, marriage, or parenthood experiences." It is the continual realization by the reader that the problems are his own that makes the book disturbing and yet engrossing. The reader is no mere aloof observer. He is a participant inevitably contrasting his own experiences with those under discussion. Yet at the same time "the family as a social institution has been lifted out of emotional controversy and has become for serious men and women a subject deserving scientific interpretation and objective study . . ." The appendices supply material in the following categories: "Literature Illustrating Family Experiences"; "Topics for Reports and References"; "Suggestions to the Instructor"; and bibliographies.

The comprehensive nature of the text can best be indicated by a few brief references to the four parts:

Part I, "The Development of the Family," traces the family's social significance and

its historical modifications. "The human family has had a double role to play. It has served as a medium by which the infancy period has been able to perform its biological and social purposes. . . . Activities carried on for the protecting and training of the child have reacted upon the parents themselves so that the home has been for them also a specialized social environment out of which have come consequences that have gone far beyond the mere care of the child itself."

Part II considers "Psychological Aspects of American Family Experience." The family is unrivaled as a source of emotional experience and as an outlet for its expression:

Marriage becomes a success, not through compromising masculine and feminine characteristics, but by consolidating the interests of man and woman in a co-operation that provides individuality for both persons. . . .

. . . .

Although each family is a distinct nucleus of interacting individuals unique in the content of its relationships, it has its being in the cultural setting which it shares with other families having similar individual traits.

Part III deals with "Social Problems of the American Family." The specific topics considered are: sociological aspects of family life; courtship; marriage; the arrested family; the broken family; the incompatible family; divorce and desertion; and the family itself as a problem.

Part IV approaches the question of what is being done about family problems. The general heading is "Specialized Programs for the Conservation of the American Family." The reader is offered a panorama of what is being attempted through law, biology, medicine, mental hygiene, home economics, and education. The final chapter summarizes "The Successful Family." It concludes:

The marriage counselor is most impressed, not by the failures that lead to divorce, but by the needless petering out of the relationship and the meager achieving of the values that potentially belong to marriage and parenthood but which through lack of domestic development are never realized.

This reviewer, disclaiming the omniscience which would be necessary for a complete evaluation, is interested primarily in the legal approach—not only the approach made by law to the solution of family difficulties, but also the problem of the interprofessional cooperation which, it seems clear, must precede any large-scale success. The law, complex as it is, is simple in comparison with the combined learning, lay and professional, now focused on family problems.

Critically examining the law in an effort to decide what its value may be in solving marriage problems, one is forced to conclude that legal process—particularly litigation—is not always the best setting in which to attempt a diagnosis and treatment of an ailing family. It is naturally disillusioning for a lawyer to think of the law as not offering a complete answer to human difficulties, or to be forced to recognize the value of judgments from other professional fields arrived at as the result of an entirely different sort of mental discipline from that to which members of the bar are subjected. But today a cooperative approach is more realistic than a historical isolationism.

Some comfort may be derived from the fact that the public at large has not yet reached a stable compromise as to many socio-legal matters. The authors point to the varying rules of law on such controversial subjects as regulation of marriage, common-law marriage, child marriage, breach of promise to marry, abortion, birth control, illegitimacy, and the property relations of husband and wife. The profession may comfort itself with the realization that until the public mind has made a decision in such matters

any rule of law respecting them continues to be controversial. Until the rule of law is definite the task of the lawyer in applying that rule is rendered vastly more difficult. And too much may be expected of the lawyers; the authors emphasize the "American habit of exaggerating the power of law to correct social ills."

Conservative lawyers may question the wisdom of attempting to portray the law of family relations in a book intended as a text for undergraduates who aspire to careers in marriage counseling. Is not a little learning a dangerous thing, and does not the legal profession have an obligation to people in need of legal advice, to see to it that such advice comes from a thoroughly competent source? Any such fears should be promptly allayed. Clearly, this book does not purport to prepare its students to give advice on legal problems. Its purpose in dealing with family law is the wholly commendable one of attempting to correlate and examine as a whole the approaches and contributions of different disciplines to a common problem. The law, too long an arcane profession, should welcome such a constructive program of cooperation, regretting only that it did not take the initiative. It is entirely appropriate that the cooperation of the disciplines should begin at the educational level. Indeed, one can imagine a thrilling seminar on The Family based upon such a book as this. The class would be composed of students from all departments of the university. The teaching group would consist of a panel of specialists providing representation for the marriage counselor, the social worker, the physician, the mental hygienist, and others—not omitting the lawyer.

JOHN S. BRADWAY.

*Professor of Law, Duke University.*

