warms. Everything that Claudel has written, everything said about him, is presented as equally important. Moreover, no one who read this book would ever guess that Claudel had been sometimes criticised. Yet even Catholic writers like Père de Tonquédec have found serious shortcomings in him. To recognise inequalities inevitable in the work of so fertile a writer would have made it easier to apprehend his output as a whole. Moreover, Professor Ryan keeps all the time very close to her subject, tracing her pen over it word by word, so to speak; she never steps back to see it from further away in its total bulk and shape. Yet Claudel's work is monumental, not because of the dimensions of any single poem or play, not even *Le Soulier de Satin*, but because of the coherence and fidelity with which the same great themes, the same great symbols of tree and season, sky and sea, recur throughout his fifty years and more of creation. Professor Ryan is certainly sensitive to this aspect of her hero and one regrets that she has not given more space to bringing it out, even if this meant the sacrifice of pages of uncritical descriptive summary and paraphrase. Her book, with its series of monotoned analyses of poem after poem, is like an interminable rosary of undifferentiated *Aves* without *Credo*, *Paters* or *Glorias*, without even a *Salve Regina* or *Sub tuum* at the end, since her last chapter, entitled *A summing-up*, consists merely in a few loosely linked remarks, variegated by quotations from the poet and his eulogists, and is not in any way a conclusion.

The professor makes little reference to what is outside Claudel and particularly to the non-Catholic world in which he, like all of us, has lived and in which his work is situated. One who knew him only through her pages would come away with the impression that he was a Catholic poet for Catholic readers, and for no others. He, who embraces so much of creation in his scope, is unwittingly reduced to the status of literature for the Catholic fireside. The author has said more than once that his themes are comprehensive and varied; yet the result of her method of presenting him is that one feels he can have no message for those outside the fold and that his work is just a nice-little-tight-little island. Though so encyclopaedically dissected, he is thus in the long run woefully diminished.

C. M. GIRDLESTONE

WAR AND HUMAN PROGRESS: An Essay on the Rise of Industrial Civilisation. By John U. Nef. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 35s.)

'During the war of 1939-45 the tragedy of Lisbon [the earthquake of 1755] became almost a weekly occurrence. It was brought about, not by nature, but by man. . . . Fathers and mothers have always been reluctant to entrust their children with knives or guns. But

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men have now entrusted themselves with powers of destruction which would be safe only in the hands of God the Father.'

This book is a masterly diagnosis, by the distinguished professor of history at Chicago University, of one aspect of that disintegration of the human personality since the Renaissance and Reformation which has already been delineated from other angles in Dorothy Sayers's *Begin Here*, Spencer Leeson's *Christian Education*, and C. S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man*. The particular aspect studied in Professor Nef's book is War—how cultural and economic conditions have advanced or retarded its dangers during modern times, whether (reciprocally) war has had any clear rôle in moulding the cultural and economic background, and why war has now become, logically and inevitably, 'total'.

In each of his three sections, divided at roughly 1640 and 1740, the author applies a uniform inquiry: the situation at the outset, from the standpoint of any European 'community' sense; the progress in science and technology and economic organisation: how far each of these affected the scope and scale of contemporary warfare, how far the wars did or did not accelerate the disintegration that becomes his climax after 1870; and how far there were still operative restraints on war, arising from moral and aesthetic realities in the traditional Graeco-Christian background.

The 416 pages of his twenty chapters contain, as the raw material of his argument, a fascinating history of the art of war in modern times at all levels: forts, guns, ships, the industries and the geographical factors on which all these depended, and the 'customs' attendant upon the professional fighting of kings and gentleman. This, for all its bulk and interest, is but the foreground. So, too, is his equally absorbing elucidation of how little in fact had been the tendency of war to beget war until the present century, and how clearly was the interaction of politics and economics on war a one-way business.

His main contribution lies in the implications of the deeper reflection that 'modern war *and* industrialism are joint products of the same historical forces'; that the conventional view of the Industrial Revolution of 1760 onwards has blinded scholars to the fact that the vital revolution in industry in Europe had begun half-a-century earlier, and that the Christian restraints on war *then* operative had become much weaker by the time the accelerated *results* of the industrial development made possible the bigger and better and total wars of our post-Bismarck era.

These restraints were most effectively two: an abiding sense of moral right and wrong, and the true sense of craftsmanship. The first of these preserved a distinction between a defensive and an aggressive war

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(especially in an age when warfare was still largely man-to-man and not yet depersonalised). The second—joy in work—made it unlikely that (for example) a bell-founder set to casting cannon would be satisfied with a utilitarian (cheap and quick) as against a beautiful (slow and expensive) output.

It is in tracing the collapse of these mitigating restraints that the argument comes to grips with ultimate issues of life and responsibility. The twentieth century regards the decorated cannon of the seventeenth as 'backward', 'for efficiency and abundance' are now the criteria, and 'the utility of the useless has been forgotten'. The more pronounced the flight from Christianity, the greater the belief in Progress—that (as with Gibbon) a civilised nation is less likely than any other to insist on being the arbiter of its own fate, and that the potentially frightful weapons produced by a scientific civilisation would themselves 'deter' war out of existence. This reads so oddly to a generation aware that the next scientific war will maybe exterminate science. But the limitations on fighting, indeed, were part of the climate that *produced* the cult of human perfectibility in the eighteenth century. Thereafter, ironically, the idea of a nation of *citizens*, born of the French Revolution, 'provided a new will to battle', and the nineteenth-century techniques made it only too easy to treat the citizen-in-arms less as a man than as a unit.

> 'The conventional idea of the industrial revolution has interposed itself like a dense fog between us and our history. It has contributed to the conceit that the industrialised peoples have emancipated themselves from the irrational and primitive aspects of their nature, instead of having merely changed the character of their aspirations in directions perhaps as irrational as those of their ancestors.'

There is need for a synthesis today, he says; and that synthesis must not come from 'the positive sciences' alone; these will 'have to be combined with philosophy, art and religion, and with the love without which philosophy, art and religion are empty'.

The root cause of the disaster, then, is spiritual. Professor Nef leaves no doubt of it. 'The separation of rational speculation from revealed Christian knowledge has been represented as both a spiritual and an intellectual mistake. . . . Hitherto the mind had possessed an inner integrity. . . . The mind found anchorage in truths transcending the positive world of daily living. . . . At the beginning of the twentieth century the conscience was left without intellectual as well as without spiritual nourishment. . . . To the moral relativist, "justice" or even Kant's "idea of right" was as vacant a concept as evil. . . . The relativist also rejected altogether the *pre*-Christian Aristotelian position that murder, theft and adultery were evil. And so it came to pass that "self-

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interest", which Vauban had called the "father" of war, was made, as with Norman Angell, the principal bulwark of peace.' And it has let man down.

The book, then, is a signal 'diagnosis' *a posteriori*, from symptoms, of a malady the theologians and philosophers have long been diagnosing *a priori*. The 'treatment' for the malady is clearly a recovery of what has been lost, in absolute standards, and in the sense of vocation in work. An extended inquiry into these things was, perhaps, hardly to be expected in what is *ex professo* a work of history. But there is hardly more than even a hint of them. The concluding chapter does not build up to an insistence on some theological essence such as alone made the sixteenth-eighteenth century Christian afterglow at all comprehensible. His plea is rather for an amorphous loyalty to 'the welfare of the human being under God as our objective', labouring 'for the best in the human being'. This may well be Humanism at its noblest. But it is not more.

A. C. F. BEALES

MORALS AND MAN IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. By J. V. Langmead-Casserley. (Longmans; 12s. 6d.)

The aim of Dr Langmead-Casserley's book is 'to explore the rôle of the relative in Christianity, and the possibility of the absolute in sociology' (p. 7) so as 'to search out a position and point of view in and from which some mutual accommodation and understanding between the sociological and theological aims and moods may be successfully established'. (p. 5.) He is convinced, rightly, that 'the immense, and too often latent, intellectual potentialities of Christian doctrine are capable of bearing this great burden of intellectual synthesis, that Christian thought at this critical juncture of our civilisation is the only intellectual force capable of interpreting our variegated culture as a single coherent idea and thus supplying it with the unity and consistency which it now so sorely needs'. (pp. 17, 18.)

A thomist will follow with the utmost sympathy and genuine appreciation the lines of thought traced by Dr Langmead-Casserley as he strives to achieve his aim. Some samples of his thought will illustrate its quality: 'The problem of the proper place and function of reason in human life is one of the most important themes of contemporary discussion.' (p. 161.) 'The only way out of ultimate relativism lies through metaphysics.' (p. 114.) ' "I am a person" and so saying I step into another dimension.' (p. 108.) 'The real bias of the contemporary attitude towards ethics is expressed in empirical social relativism, in the *a priori* relativism of the logical positivists, and in what might be called the realistic metaphysical relativism of the Existentialists.' (p. 77.)

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