way of all flesh": Weakened further by crises and schisms, by civil and international wars, it would suffer a formidable regression in most fields of human endeavor, a relapse accompanied by the return to localism, ruralism, and primitivism. Even in the event that some evidences of material and immaterial achievement were to be preserved, this period would resemble in general effect the era between the break-down of Classical Roman Civilization and the beginnings of the Feudal stage of Western Civilization - in short, a new Dark Age would envelop us with all the suffering and loss that this term calls to our mind.

VIII

To sum up: Predictions play a significant part in the most varied areas. They may be meaningful for the intimate life of an individual and crucial for the future destiny of mankind. Prophecy has been practiced for a considerable period of time; prognostication has become more frequent and grown more reliable as time passes. If we are truly intent upon knowing more about the future, we must pool our resources, and devote more time and money to the systematic and objective exploration of to-morrow. Then we may witness, within our life-time, the emergence of a branch of knowledge which could be thought of as a new science or a new art - the name matters little. In spite of all its shortcomings, this new "Futurology" could eventually take its place with other branches of knowledge, which, like philosophy or sociology, have to rely considerably on speculation and intuition. True, it is not equipped to anticipate the history of the next decades in all their particular aspects. Futurology will have to be satisfied with prognosticating basic trends and general outlines of the future, perhaps limiting itself to the prediction of more than one possibility. While our power of abstract reasoning leads us to see the enduring design of social structures as well as their capacity for organic change (growth, evolution, decay, ect.) and we are thus best equipped to foresee gradual organic changes within them, it is beyond the power of the futurologist to predict isolated events that may give it outer form at any particular time. The recognition of single occurrences or facts is dependent on our sense perception which only operates in the present (the past being made accessible through memory).

Our real problem then is not so much whether the future can be known, but whether it ought to be known. Will not perhaps our greater knowledge automatically lead to a fatalistic attitude towards what is in store for us? If fatalism implies subsidence of human endeavor and a growing resignation, it need not be part of an attitude which will draw strength from the science of the future. After all, the future of our society and culture, when scientifically analyzed, appears as the product of man's conscious and unconscious actions and omissions. Though man