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A sight-seeing traveller stood in front of the pyramids of Gizeh and was told by the guide that these giant structures were built <sup>nearly five</sup> ~~more than~~ four thousand years ago. Evidently impressed the traveller murmured: "Human culture is after all a terribly old matter." He might have found it to be still more terribly old by realizing that some cave paintings in Africa, showing remarkable craftsmanship of early men are still ten times older than the pyramids and that the use of fire and primitive tools dates back to more than hundred thousand years ago.

There are pessimists among us who believe that this "old" culture shows signs of senility and decline. Some of the worst pessimists are even feeling that nuclear destruction in wiping out humanity in our century may be just well-timed and predestined to save civilized ~~ax~~ mankind from the sad fate of overageing and senile infirmity.

The first thing which this book <sup>will</sup> ~~shall~~ teach you is that the pessimistic talk about ~~max~~ an overageing, or even senile culture is pure nonsense. These few hundred thousand years of human ~~ex~~ evolution are quite a short period compared with the age of other species on earth which are living soundly and happily. And in particular, the few thousand years of the historic period of civilized mankind are almost infinitely short compared with the million thousand years ahead of us which mankind can use for the further development of its culture unless a fool triggers the nuclear holocaust. But the odds are better than hundred to one that the sound commonsense and the will to survive of the vast majority of men will prevail. Thus the present existence of millionfold more destructive weapons will put soon an end to the primitive barbarian ~~mat~~ method of trying to settle international conflicts, by means of wars.

After having sailed round the cliff of nuclear annihilation mankind can embark on its age-long voyage through one or two billion of years until the sun will be either too hot or too cool to maintain life on earth.

Relative to the total possible future life-span of human evolution the historic past is negligibly small. Representing the entire billion-year life of ~~ax~~ mankind by that of a single individual we cannot fail to realize that our present state in the 20th century with