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BICENTENNIAL OUTLOOK

As we start our country's Bicentennial year, it would be easy to agree with the historians who foresee America becoming another of the many civilizations which perished after discarding the moral standards which bound their people together.

Crime continues to increase dramatically, especially violent crime, teenage crime, crime within the public schools, and even female crime. White collar crime and political corruption are at an alltime high, involving Congressmen, Senators, Governors, and even Presidents and Vice Presidents. Alcohol and drug addition keep spiraling upwards.

One out of every two marriages now ends in divorce. Vener.eal disease has risen to epidemic levels and is one of the most common illnesses in the nation. Abortion, the killing of unborn babies, is our third most popular operation, ranking right behind tonsilectomies and appendectomies. Militant homosexuals and lesbians are popular lecturers on college campuses and guests on television and radio programs.

Anyone who considers movies and books the mirror of a society's morals could easily become depressed. It is as though fast-buck promoters are determined to prove the validity of Alexander Pope's famous couplets:

> "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
> As to be hated needs but to be seen;
> Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

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Our leading newspapers compete vigorously with each other in large daily advertisements for pornographic X-rated movies and stage shows. Talented and beautiful actresses play the roles of prostitutes. Crime and vice are depicted as more rewarding than virtue and: family life.

Newsstands outdo each other in stocking thefr shelves with pocket books and magazines featuring hard-core violence and perver sion. THE HAPPY HOOKER and its imitators sell millions of copies, describing the alleged rewards of a career of vice. Among the highly-advertised new books of the season is an autobiography of the Gabor family describing the material rewards of the mother's six abortions and how she got twenty husbands for herself and her three daughters.

R-rated movies which glamorize prostitution, such as THE OWL *AND* THE PUSSYCAT and IRMA LA DOUCE, are dirtying our home television screens. X-rated movies are now available on hotel and motel room TV sets. Television violence continues to increase, despite ample evidence of its corrupting effect on our youth.

As we take our Bicentennial moral inventory, we should heed the advice of the great French commentator Alexis de Tocqueville, who wrote in the last century: "America is great because America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

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