

JOHN DAY

SHOW WINDOW

By Elmer Davis

When Elmer Davis portrayed a certain reverend bishop in his *Portrait of a Cleric*, several hundred people wrote scandalized or admiring letters to *Harper's Magazine* in which the article appeared.

When in the *Saturday Review of Literature* he good-humoredly flayed the present generation of writers in an essay called *The Age of Impotence*, at least a dozen novelists repented and began to lead better lives. And when he described the life and works of William Hale Thompson in *The Portrait of an Elected Person*, all Chicago bared its head and waited for the thunderbolt.

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By Paul Busson

Out of Germany has come a tale of the wanderings of a soul, which critics are applauding as a masterpiece of the fantastic. *The Chicago Daily News* says of it: "Essentially masculine, belonging with 'Jurgen,' 'Tristram Shandy' and 'Burton.'" And Conrad Aiken in the *New York Evening Post* says: "This is one of those occasional books that make the life of the reviewer worth living" and calls it "a thriller of the first order." \$2.50.

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AT ALL BOOK STORES

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Books of Special Interest

Chinese Tales

TAO TALES. By H. M. RIDEOUT. New York: Duffield & Co. 1927. \$2.

THE RED DRAGON. By L. S. PALEN. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1927. \$2.

THE JADE RABBIT. By BLOOD and MARRIOT. New York: The Dial Press. 1927.

CHINESE WHITE. By D. C. WILSON. New York: J. H. Sears & Co. 1927. \$2.

Reviewed by GEORGE H. DANTON
Formerly of Tsing-Hua College

IT is the incurable curse of the Romantic in China which paralyzes almost all writers of fiction who lay their scenes in that country. This curse of the Romantic persists even in such books as attempt, through a specious attention to the external details of a Chinese atmosphere, to portray China as it is and from within. But actually no amount of direct quotation in the form of scattered fragments of Chinese, no amount of the atmosphere of the *hutongs*, or of the temple fairs, indeed, nothing that simulates the actualities of Chinese life can compensate for the farrago of secret societies, mysterious brotherhoods, and all the other clap-trap with which stories about China are constantly filled. Actual Chinese fiction has a hard reality which is so faceted that it reflects life on every gleaming surface. Its psychological delineation is not conscious and not affected. The foreign fiction written about China loses outline, deals in *clichés*, following a blind and really stupid tradition, and repeating to a nauseating degree, the old conventionalizations of inscrutability, dissipation, or whatever happens to be the catchword at hand. This has continued until the average Westerner conceives of China as a bizarre combination of tawdry "gift shoppe" magnificence and unfathomable mystery. None of this fiction is written to show the Chinese as they are, out of their own environment and with their own type of tragedy; none of it shows the foreigner in China as he is, a prose actuality whose dissipations and whose poetry can only be understood by those who live them. What is presented is a series of pictures with the artistic outlook of E. P. Roe, and, in general, the moral attitude of Casanova. Or, more recently, since the political world of China has come to the foreground, the whole paraphernalia of revolution is used as a background and the pseudo-political novel flourishes.

The four books under consideration are, in general, examples of the type, though, in the case of Mr. Rideout's *Tao Tales*, in somewhat modified degree. He, at least, has written stories which carry with them a certain charm and which have a style of their own, a style, to be sure, which indulges itself in words like "pinguid" and which attempts, rather foolishly, to reproduce the succinctness of the Chinese language, but which, all in all, shows a writer who is interested in the manner of his matter. The tales themselves purport to be told by an old Chinese cook and may be, for all that; some of them have a distinct Chinese touch, but the whole book, which tends to mount at first, reaches a level of mediocrity in narration by the time it reaches the tale, "The Sunny Pool," and does not rise from that. It must be said for the whole, however, that it is an almost successful attempt to reproduce some of the ideal of courage and bravery which the Chinese postulate for themselves, and which is so convincingly portrayed by them in that wonderful work, the "Shui Hu."

Mr. Palen, who, we learn from the jacket, collaborated with Ossendowski in his mystifications, has written a novel which would be good if it were not actually too stolid with apparent knowledge of China on the one hand, and too dominated by an absolutely conventional plot on the other. The story itself is not without interest as a mere yarn; the characterization is completely unconvincing, especially that of the young Chinese revolutionist, Dr. Ma, but as stories of Chinese life go, it is well-written and contains no absolute ethnological or political "howlers."

"The Jade Rabbit" is a completely usual story. In it we have the titled Englishman, the greasy Pole (with the obvious pun), the mysterious abbot, the renegade priest, the firearms, the attack on the white lady, the slimy Japanese, in fact, the whole paraphernalia, ending in the usual happy marriage after a sing-song girl has been murdered—(incidentally, the difference between *sing-song girl* and *prostitute* is not understood)—and after the psychological prob-

lem has been completely bilked. If one does not want to think and does not know much about China, one can spend an hour of semi-boredom in reading this yarn.

In regard to "Chinese White," the only thing that can be said is, "How do they do it? How do they get them printed?"

Neurosis Boulevard

COUNT TEN. By MILDRED EVANS GILMAN. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$2.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

SEVEN cities competed for the honor of being Homer's home town; another seven compete for Mrs. Gilman, according to her veracious publishers. From the seventh, which was Springfield, Massachusetts, she came to New York; and unless the inhabitants of Springfield are of an extraordinarily forgiving disposition, she had better not go back.

For this book is about a town called Southfield and a street called Elm Avenue—one of those old New England streets where run-down old families in run-down old houses fight a losing battle against the encroachment of Slavs and Italians, filling stations, and three-decker tenements. If Mrs. Gilman reports correctly this predestined defeat of the old New England, however deplorable it may be from the cultural point of view, is all to the good from the psychiatric standpoint. Elm Avenue ought to have been called Neurosis Boulevard. Along its shaded length envy, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness find a happy hunting ground. Aged misers eat mouldy bread, fire their employees, bury their wives, and oppress their children; old maids give vent to lewd unchristian imaginings as they watch the embraces of the young married couple who leave the shades up next door; the minister flees the amorous desires of the spinsters among his flock to make ineffectual love to a red-headed young atheist while his wife dies in childbirth, and the red-headed atheist refuses him, apparently, because she was too busy being true to a husband and a lover to take on anybody else; paralytics groan vainly in bed, sciatics and rheumatics fall back into the wheel chair, never to emerge again; downtrodden daughters become pregnant by the grocer's boy and hang themselves in the attic, and darling mother's cherished picture is turned toward the wall.

All this sounds rather like Artzibasheff, in summary; but Mrs. Gilman has been skilful enough to make each separate bit plausible, even if the cumulative effect is rather overpowering. And she has lightened her story by the recurrent timely appearances of Grandma Clenabery, one of the most engaging characters in recent fiction—Grandma Clenabery, who at ninety-six suddenly began to scandalize her family by reminiscences of a youth which seems to have been one long succession of poison-needle kidnappings and hairbreadth escapes from a fate worse than death.

Indeed, Mrs. Gilman's only serious fault is an enviable one—an excess of good material. Excellent stuff is here but it is badly organized. From the rather overcrowded beginning one expects a panorama story of the disappearance of old New England before what is perhaps jocosely termed progress; then it begins to look as if she is writing the story of the young and red-headed Elsie Clark; then of the Reverend Peter Flanders; and finally of Stella Godwin. Stella, the old maid who found about her only outlet in church work enlivened by a romantic desire for the pastor, finally gets most of the book; but the demonstration of how she was frustrated by her mother's precepts—"Count ten before you speak," and so on—does not quite come through; if the book is about Stella there is too much extraneous matter, if it is about other persons, or about Springfield at large, there is too much Stella. Possibly it is old-fashioned to ask for order and proportion in a novel; but for lack of these qualities Mrs. Gilman's work fails to seem as good as most of it really is.

The American world which knows Yvette Guilbert only from her appearances in this country will not for that reason find any the less interesting her memoirs which have just appeared under the title, "La Chanson de Ma Vie" (Paris:Grasset). They are the record of a brave struggle, told with humor and sprightliness, and deprived of bitterness by the success that in later years contrasted so vividly with the sordid poverty of the great artist's early youth.

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Books of Special Interest

Education and the Future

EDUCATION FOR A CHANGING CIVILIZATION. By WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$1.

Reviewed by I. L. KANDEL

Teachers College

UNREST in education is no new theme, but at no period has it been so widespread and universal as in the last decade. Everywhere the chief preoccupation is with the reform of content and methods of instruction. Outside of the United States there is the additional complication that arises out of the new attempts to evolve systems of educational organization that are more consistent with the demands of democracies. In general the unrest is caused by a recognition that much that was taught whether in the elementary or secondary schools failed to carry over into life activities, that education in general had become encrusted with tradition and formalism, and with content that had lost its meaning for modern societies. The keynote of the new movements is a desire to cultivate personality through content that has at once meaning for the individual and value for social progress. So stated the problem seems apparently simple and the very simplicity of statement has elicited greater interest among parents and laymen than educational questions have done hitherto. It is only as one examines the professional proposals for reform that revolve around this central aim and that are appearing in almost every important language of the civilized world, that one realizes the essential difficulties involved in the problem.

Professor Kilpatrick presents in the first two of his three lectures on "Education for a Changing Civilization" an excellent and clear statement of the problems that confront education and society today. Starting with the thesis that the chief characteristic of the present age is rapid change due to the rapid development of science and the changed mental attitude consequent thereon, to industrialization, and to democracy, he draws attention to the intellectual, moral, and social "lag" between the school and society as it is coming to be. Authoritarianism, while declining to some extent in the intellectual field, still dominates the religious, moral, social, legal, and political outlook. While a critical attitude and tested thought characterize modern science they do not carry over into other activities of life. The task of education is to develop a new freedom which asks why and demands an answer before it accepts. The tempo of modern life is rapid, old solutions will not satisfy, and the new generation is facing an unknown future, for which youth should be prepared. The cultivation of dynamic personality able to face new problems and situations is, then, the problem, or, in Professor Kilpatrick's words, "Our problem then would seem to be to help our young people make the shift from external authority to internal authority."

The solution of this problem lies in a close approximation between education and its processes to immediate life and its educational processes. In other words, the content of the school must have meaning for the pupil and be of value for life in society, while the methods must follow the methods common in life outside of the school. The separation between education and life resulted in formalism, conservatism, and neglect of the individual, and the establishment of a purely literary and bookish ideal of education. "Only as the school is placed on a basis of actual living can certain necessary social-moral habits and attitudes be built, certain necessary methods of attack upon problems and enterprises be developed." The purpose of education from this point of view is, then, to develop a critical attitude, a scientific habit of mind, ability to judge and open-mindedness, breadth of view and readiness to cooperate in the interest of social progress and well-being even at the risk of questioning the validity of existing institutions.

Up to this point no one who holds a rational conception of liberal education would differ from Professor Kilpatrick's main thesis. It may be objected that he does not state how many pupils could profit by such an education and takes no account of the contributions of the psychologists on individual differences. One may question both the economy and validity of "the internal authority of how it works when tried" in any type of activity, without pointing to crime statistics and moral stand-

ards due to some extent to the elimination of external authority in our education, while still another criticism may be found in the still inadequate knowledge of the factors that make for progress. Yet in the main his thesis on the aims of modern education may be accepted without following Professor Kilpatrick in all his implications.

The third lecture, in which these implications are worked out, is, as the author admits, the most controversial. Here Professor Kilpatrick develops his ideas on curriculum and method. Taking as his point of departure the necessity of preparing the younger generation to face an unknown future and to be prepared to meet unsolved social problems, he is prepared to discard "for most pupils" Latin as well as Greek, mathematics, much of present history study and modern foreign languages, while "English and the sciences need remaking from within rather than rejection." He leaves, then, for major consideration the study of social problems. This is a serious indictment of current practices, all the more serious because it finds wide acceptance among educators. And yet it may be seriously questioned whether the indictment can ever be against subjects as such. Those who criticize subjects because of their failure to achieve anything, fail always to take into account what is today a far more serious indictment of our systems of education, and that is the large number of teachers who are either inadequately prepared in, or entirely unfamiliar with, subjects that they profess to teach. Before subjects can be discarded, it would be well to discover what can be done with good teaching; otherwise the time will not be distant when "social studies," too, will follow the rest into the discard. Assuming, however, that Professor Kilpatrick's contention is sound, can the unknown future be anticipated, can the future social problems be foreseen? Attempts to discover lines of future interest have been made, as, for example, in the sciences. Newspapers and magazines were analyzed to discover the major scientific trends of the day; ten years later it was found that the emphases had shifted. The same would no doubt be true in any field. It would be unjust to Professor Kilpatrick, however, to leave the impression that he wishes to discard everything that has come from the past. "Many old demands remain substantially unaltered." "Accordingly, to such of the older limited stock of precise subject-matter as should survive from this generation to the next, there must be added certain more generalized methods and attitudes of attack that especially fit for meeting novel situations."

Knowledge of what has been done and said in the past is still essential, and without knowledge new methods of attack cannot be developed. It is highly problematical, however, whether teachers can go beyond this, whether education can undertake more than transmission of the inheritance of the race and adjustment to the present through content that has meaning and by new methods that would be valid in new situations. Granted that "we face as never before an unknown shifting future," how can "children learn to adapt themselves to a situation which we, as teachers, can only partially foresee"? Dealing with similar proposals for an education in civic and social preparedness Walter Lippmann in "The Phantom Public" offers a criticism and suggestion that apply in the present instance. "If the schools attempt to teach children how to solve the problems of the day, they are bound always to be in arrears. The most they can conceivably attempt is the teaching of patterns of thought and feeling which will enable the citizen to approach a new problem in some useful fashion." And again, "No scheme of education can equip him (the citizen) in advance for all the problems of mankind; no device of publicity, no machinery of enlightenment, can endow him during a crisis with the antecedent detailed and technical knowledge which is required for executive action."

How great is the difficulty of anticipating the educational demands of a "shifting future" can best be realized by a comparison of the varied "job analyses" and enumeration of objectives for adult life. The criticisms offered of the solution proposed by Professor Kilpatrick do not affect the value of his analysis of the present educational situation. Indeed, Professor Kilpatrick does not claim to legislate; he recognizes, as has been long recognized in England and is today in a new sense recognized in Germany, that the ultimate solution of the educational problem can only be

found in a well-prepared teacher enjoying a freedom that is limited only by sound professional knowledge and insight. Such a condition is still remote and especially in the United States, where the chief danger lies not in inadequacy of theory, solutions, and panaceas, but in preaching the philosophy of freedom for the pupil and in denying it for the teacher by a welter of courses of study, textbooks, supervisors, and experts. The older theory lent itself to such a hierarchy of controls. If Professor Kilpatrick's general survey has any value, it lies in directing attention to the incompatibility between new theories of education and old systems of organization.

How difficult is the task of reform is well illustrated in Miss Josephine Chase's "New York at School," whose publication was made possible by the Public Education Association. The volume does not attempt to do more than present a descriptive account of the public educational system of New York City. The task is well performed and one cannot read it without realizing the immensity of the educational problem that confronts New York. Obviously the danger lies in the development of a vast machine. While schools have been set aside for various experiments, New York City is still far from encouraging that variety and freedom that is found in the educational system of the London County Council. It is unnecessary, however, since the volume does not invite it, to enter into any considerations of the quality of education offered in New York, the size of buildings, the inbreeding of teachers, and other questions. As a survey of the fabric of the educational system "New York at School" is a valuable contribution for giving the parents and taxpayers an intelligent insight into the largest educational enterprise in the world.

How Names Arise

SURNAMES. By ERNEST WEEKLEY. Dutton, 1927. \$2.50.

IT was an excellent idea to reprint, after a decade, this book whose earlier editions must have received little attention in the war years. This is a sort of by-product of Mr. Weekley's resources toward a dictionary of English surnames, whose completion, he confesses in his introduction (dated 1916), continually recedes into the future. Meanwhile some six thousand English names and their derivations, with some hundreds in French and German, are here listed. It is a book to be kept and nibbled at, from time to time, with that curious sort of pleasure which some people derive from browsing in "Who's Who" or the dictionary.

"The Study of Surnames," Mr. Weekley observes, "may be regarded as a harmless pastime or as a branch of learning. As a pastime it is as innocent as stamp collecting, and possibly as intellectual. As a branch of learning it is an inexhaustible, and hitherto practically unworked, branch of philological knowledge. A complete dictionary of English surnames would not only form a valuable supplement to the 'New English Dictionary,' but would in great measure revolutionize its chronology." Again and again he cites occupational names (all surnames, one learns, are derived from baptismal names, locality, or occupations, or are nicknames) appearing on medieval rolls a century or two before there is any trace in the language records of the nouns and verbs of which they are composed.

There are a good many surprises for the lay reader in this volume. The older a name is the more likely it is to have been corrupted and abbreviated "to a cacophonous monosyllable distinguished by great economy of vowels." So, says Mr. Weekley, Germans named Bugge, Bopp, Dietz, Dankl, and Kluck" have as much right to look down on most of their polysyllabic neighbors as our own Bugg, Bubb, etc., on such upstarts as Napier, Pomeroy, Percy, and Somerset." Names that sound alike have been assimilated, so that Mr. Smith's ancestor who, some time between the beginning of the Crusades and the Renaissance bestowed his personal cognomen as a legacy to his descendants, may have been a blacksmith, or have lived on a "smeth" or plain, or have been a "smethe," i.e., smooth or slippery, person. Medieval names were extraordinary and not always complimentary—e.g. William Thynnewyt and Ralph Badintheved; no doubt most of us are lucky if we are unable to trace our ascent.

On the other hand, some names have kept their early form with little or no change; one is grateful to Mr. Weekley for reminding us that the name of that tough person, the present (at this moment of writing) Premier of France, means exactly what it seems to mean. "Raymond Squarefist"—it sounds like the First Crusade.