

Our National Heritage

THE NEW BARBARIANS. By WILLIAM C. ABBOTT. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1925. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MAURICE SHERMAN

"IT is absurd to talk of revolution in a government which rests on the consent of the governed," says Professor Wilbur C. Abbott of Harvard University in "The New Barbarians," the first of a series of books on American nationalism by a number of carefully chosen authors. "All this wild talk about overthrowing the government by force is ridiculous," he says. "The danger we face is something quite different, the subversion of the government in accordance with ideas wholly antagonistic to the principles on which it was founded."

Professor Abbott in four words describes what the forefathers had in mind when they established this Republic. The "principle of cooperative individualism" is an apt and accurate statement of the conception that was in the minds of Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Franklin, Madison, and their compatriots in the convention that framed our scheme of government. The proposal to translate this cooperative individualism into "bureaucratic socialism" is the peril that confronts Americans today.



Professor Abbott's book is a frank attempt to evaluate the various movements that consciously or unconsciously look to a change in our form of government. He says that "it does not profess to be exhaustive" and he hopes it will not be found "exhausting." He is somewhat too modest in his estimate of its scope, but the hope he expresses is not misplaced. He has crowded into 247 pages a most readable and comprehensive account of the aims, purposes, and aspirations of the American people in establishing a new and different kind of government, and no less comprehensive in his account of what is now going on to discredit what has been done to effect subversive changes.

To meet altering conditions Professor Abbott recognizes that some changes may be inevitable. He by no means approaches his subject with a mind closed to everything that is new. One looks in vain, however, for any evidence of belief on his part that the changes for which there has been the most persistent agitation are necessary, desirable, salutary, or practicable. He regards the social problem as one that does not lend itself to sudden or miraculous solution. He seems to accept the view that reform is a matter of slow and steady growth.

Those who favor destructive methods are dealt with by him in vigorous and wholesome fashion. He analyzes their motives as fearlessly and frankly as they have discussed and criticized our institutions and our plan of government. If he has no measure of toleration for the blatant exponents of communistic doctrine, he has scarcely less for those who have engaged, through ignorance or otherwise, in subversive methods that seek to overthrow the existing order by deceptive processes. The book takes up the challenge to our principles and practices and upholds with calm reason and clear logic the faith that is still held by the vast majority of our people.



What Professor Abbott seeks to impress on his countrymen is that the system of government set up here constitutes an inheritance which should not be permitted to suffer impairment at the hands of those unacquainted with its ideals and traditions. Essentially English in its fundamental characteristics, it embodies features peculiarly adapted to meet the aspirations of a people in whom love of liberty and freedom is strongly ingrained. If, on the one hand, the tyranny of autocratic rulers was effectually guarded against, on the other, wise precautions were taken against the dangers inherent to democracy. A representative scheme of government with checks and balances carefully interposed was the result.

Under this dispensation of patriotic and far-seeing statesmanship the American nation has grown and prospered far beyond the fondest dreams of its founders. That which was a painfully wrought experiment in governmental procedure has proved its practicability under a test of sufficient duration to justify continued confidence in its character and adaptability to meet present-day conditions.

Too many Americans have not grasped the thought that this, their government, is theirs by virtue of bloody conflict, supreme sacrifice, and grim determination to achieve an ideal; that it was born of a desire for independence and was preserved in after years only through bitter civil strife. It comes to us as a rich heritage, entitled to our love and veneration. It is ours to protect and defend. Yet we have suffered attacks to be made upon it with a degree of indifference and toleration that does scant credit to our sense of national existence. We have permitted aliens among us to proceed on the assumption that here was a place for them to work out their theories of government; that if they did not like what they found here they were free to make it over. That the Republic of the United States belongs to those who created it and to their heirs, and that an obligation rests on those living under its flag to respect its laws, institutions, and customs is an idea that has been too generally disregarded.

Against this is the view that the United States is a "melting pot not only of races but of principles of government and society, whose character and direction, to say nothing of its form of government, are yet to be determined." No such notion as this does Professor Abbott entertain. He refutes it boldly, but in no dogmatic fashion. So clearly and simply does he show the essential fallacies of regarding the United States as an experiment station for evolving a new system of government that the reader finds his patriotism kindled anew. He realizes that here we have something worth preserving in all its great fundamental aspects, something that should not be profaned by innovations that constitute a perversion of the structure itself.

If the founders of this Republic had it in their minds to establish a government that could not be overthrown by ordinary methods, the plan they devised made at once for security and endurance. So long as the Federal Government confines itself to the purposes for which it was established, which means so long as the States jealously guard their sovereignty over domestic matters, the danger from the radicalism of force is remote. That danger will come only with the destruction of the nice balance of powers existing between the central government and the governments of the respective States. It is the agitation, so pronounced of late, in favor of granting the government at Washington vastly increased powers, with the consequent subordination of State control over local affairs, that needs to be guarded against. To this danger there has recently been a pronounced awakening.



Professor Abbott does not question the worthy motives of some of those who urge the complete dominance of the Federal Government over everything and everybody. He sees, however, as only the historian can, the inevitable consequences to our republican form of government if the program of centralization is carried out. To strike a blow at a single citadel of government may seem comparatively simple from the viewpoint of the revolutionist. But to launch a revolutionary movement not only against a Federal Government of limited and expressly delegated powers but also against forty-eight separate and distinct State governments, each vitally interested in preserving its own institutions, is a vastly more serious and difficult matter. This helps to explain why every so-called reform that seeks to increase the power of the central government has the active support of radical elements that care nothing for the reform itself. Professor Abbott elaborates the thought thus crudely expressed with a calmness worthy of emulation by others who have written on the subject. His words carry conviction. They are admirably chosen to show the transition from cause to effect.

And who are the "new barbarians"? Professor Abbott defines them as the foes of democracy, all prompted by the same destructive urge to make over the social structure and change the American system of government. Some of them, notably those who were but recently a part of European serfdom and who have had no acquaintance with democracy as we understand it, would resort to the crude method of force. From these there is less to fear than from those cultivated "Americans" whose obsession is reform. Impatient with conditions not to their liking, they see in bureaucratic devices an easy way to gain their ends. They constitute the aggressive minorities who, as Professor Abbott says, "appeal to the great principles of unity, liberty and tolerance,

and at the same time, by every means in their power, seek to extend their own particular interests." They are advocates of a paternal form of government. They talk plausibly. They are frequently men and women of the very highest ideals. To them the basic principles of our government mean little or nothing. They laugh at Washington's advice in his Farewell Address:

Resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretext. One method of assault may be to effect alterations in the Constitution which will impair the energy of the system and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown.

The time has come, says Professor Abbott, to speak plainly about American nationalism and its enemies. We must regard the newer additions to our numbers as inheritors, not founders. If the Nation is to survive with the qualities in which the vast majority of its people believe, the efforts of that majority to convert the minority must be at least as vigorous as that of the minority to effect undesirable changes. No greater effort has been put forth in this direction than by Professor Abbott himself through the medium of "The New Barbarians," which is aptly described as "a vital book for thinking Americans."

The Vivid Near East

BEN KENDIM. By AUBREY HERBERT. Edited by DESMOND MACCARTHY. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1925. \$6.

Reviewed by ROSE WILDER LANE

TO one reading Aubrey Herbert's "Ben Kendim" it occurs again that living is a dilemma with horns as many as the legs of the millipede. The book reminds one of that pronged difficulty which presents on the one hand standardization, and on the other, anarchy; presents, that is to say, a choice between order, efficiency, mass production, mass psychology, the machine, the West, and disorder, individualism, the human being, the East.

It is no accident that "Ben Kendim" is published by a house that bridges the Atlantic, for Europe still wavers between these two extremes as America does not. A wholly American publisher, searching the book-trade's pigeonholes for a place into which to fit this volume, would not find it. Aubrey Herbert, second son of the fourth Earl of Carnarvon, M. P. for the Yeovil division of Somerset, traveler, linguist, and lover of the East, has left us a book which defies our categories. It approaches the American market falteringly. The jacket announces, "A record of Eastern travel"; the introduction murmurs that it "is, in a sense, an autobiography."

The book, however, is as its author named it—"Ben Kendim," or, in English, "I, myself." It is neither travel nor autobiography, neither sociology nor politics; it is all these and more. It is unclassifiable as a human life is unclassifiable, for men are not yet produced by the Taylor method, and life is not pigeonholes. This is a clearly recorded bit of life itself, the life of the Near East as seen by an Englishman known and beloved from Zagreb to Basra.

As Aubrey Herbert modestly says, "David Urquhart had the affection of the Circassians and has had no successor in a later generation; Professor Browne stands alone in Persia. Lawrence is the undisputed champion of the Arabs;"—(Does the adjective stand in the presence of Miss Gertrude Bell?) "Bouchier and the Buxtons were the heroes of Bulgaria; Steed, Seton-Watson and Edward Boyle were the advocates of a Serbia that existed in their minds; the Greeks have had a number of archaeologists, and there are still a few remaining romanticists devoted to their renaissance." Aubrey Herbert, who "went to the East by accident, as a young man may go to a party, and find his fate there," does not add that he himself knew all the warring races and policies, yet remained unblinded by the passionate loves and hates that are, like trachoma, an infection in those lands. His life said that for him.

On the mountain-wall of the valley of Bulqis, where the Albanian boundary line, never visited by the Geneva politicians who drew it, cuts Dibra's capital city from Albania as an eye is cut from a potato, lives the chief who first spoke to me of Aubrey Herbert. He had come many miles to ask news of him. To the Albanians about that camp-

fire the world was divided, as for most of us, into two parts; their own country, and *mergim*, the foreign lands. Of *mergim* they knew the Five Powers, the Sultan-Caliph, King Wilson of America, Miss Edith Durham, and Aubrey Herbert. Politely they said, "Long live King Wilson!" and from their hearts they cried, "Long live Aubrey Herbert!"

Two years later a Turkish officer sat motionless under the whirring fans between the green-brick arches of the Hotel Maude in Baghdad. He had long been fighting somewhere in Kurdistan; the letters of months were stacked on the little coffee-table beside him, unopened. The first whose seal he had broken was crumpled in his hand. Tragedy was evident to the few persons who sat about, stupefied by the delirium of feverish heat. A friend laid a hand on his arm. "A letter from my wife in Cairo," he explained. "Aubrey Herbert is dead."



The personality of this man, who thus united old enmities in common affection for him, lives in the pages of "Ben Kendim." There are few persons in the world who can without impertinence question Aubrey Herbert's opinions upon Near Eastern affairs. These opinions he has expressed the more clearly because he has not stated them didactically. They are interspersed with impressions, sketches of men and events, anecdotes, a mass of the experiences from which grow the opinions of a thoughtful, open-minded, and humorous traveler.

With such a traveler, then, the reader of this book journeys through the Balkans to Constantinople, through the Yemen, the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia, Syria, Albania; he observes the Young Turk revolution, the counter revolution, the roots and the fruit of the Balkan wars. He becomes acquainted with European and Near Eastern statesmen; he encounters the Arab, that perplexing fascination and uncertainty, both personally and politically; he lingers in the veritable caravanserai—not those of which tenors sing.

The shaping policies of nations are given no less vividly than the character of their peoples. "Enmity has not been a luxury among these (Near Eastern) people, but their daily bread, on which they have been forced to exist." "Old Pashas, whose knowledge of history consisted in a complete understanding that time did not heal but fermented the European discord, which again and again had proved the salvation of Turkey." "France is again inhabited by the ghost of Napoleon, who has returned without his genius."

Albania had in Aubrey Herbert, as in all westerners who know the Near East, an admirer and a champion. A third of his book is given to his travels in that country, where "fate and inclination sent me continually from 1907 to 1918." The first-hand information he gained in 1913 on the Montenegrin frontier and along the Serbian borders of Kossovo and the Sanjak of Novi Bazar is often an addition to our knowledge of events, though its value lies chiefly in corroboration. These details help to fill in the outlines of the belief—now rapidly becoming established fact, since the disclosures by Professor Stanoje Stanojevich of Belgrade and by Ljuba Jovanovich, President of the Serbian Parliament—that the Great War was deliberately precipitated by official Serbia, relying on promised French and Russian intervention to extend Serbian boundaries.



Ismail Kemal Bey's struggle to maintain the freedom of Albania, on which European peace depended, is well presented:

I felt that everything depended on Ismail Kemal. But he was old and slow and counted time his friend when it was really his enemy. If he did not do something . . . Essad would have his way; and that would mean first a partitioned Albania, then soon, or possibly a little later at Essad's death, a European war. . . I said I would do what I could to help in England, but the Liberals thought the Albanians were all Turks and Moslems, and the Conservatives thought they were disturbers of the peace, like the Irish.

A sense of imminent calamity which was to overwhelm the world broods upon these pages. The Greeks were already invading southern Albania. Ismail Kemal spoke of "how easy an understanding ought to be between Greece and Albania. 'The Greeks and Albanians have the same enemies, the Slavs,' said he, 'and if they have no common ancestry, they are at least neighbors who have won

freedom. But the Greeks are talkers, and vain. The oratory of Pericles destroys the statesmanship of Venizelos.'"

It would be difficult to pack more understanding of the western Balkan situation into fewer words.

This conciseness of expression runs through the leisurely charm of the book. One reads as one travels through those lands, enchanted, shocked, amused, and at the end surprised by the clear-cut whole which has emerged from detail. The story of unhappy Turkey is here, from the joyous hope of 1908, when the Young Turks thought they were joining hands with Europe in reforming Turkey, to the cynical desperation of 1922, when England and France, ruthlessly at war in Anatolia, were using tortured Greece and Turkey as their weapons. Aubrey Herbert went to the Near East trustfully believing, as most Americans still believe, the propaganda of Europe's imperialism; he lived to understand the Near East, and to place the blood-guiltiness where it belongs.

The whole book cries for quotation. Once read, it will not remain unhandled on any shelf; it will come easily to the hand, and soon fall open at scores of places. For it is not only a record of things past; it reveals also the realignment of forces making for the next war. There is every probability that Americans who were young in the Great War will not be middle-aged in the Greater War. There is perhaps a possibility that we will watch its approach with more intelligent knowledge of realities than was ours in the years before 1914. If this prove to be so, the few books like "Ben Kendim" will have contributed most to that result. And I know no book that implicitly presents more clearly the values of that attitude of courage and humor, sympathy and detachment, which best enables one to see and endure realities in this always interesting world.

The Blavatskian Puzzle

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT. 1875-1925. A History and a Review. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. 1925. \$5.

Reviewed by WOODBRIDGE RILEY

THERE used to be a second hand bookstore whose proprietor had a novel way of saving his face. When asked to reduce his prices, he would reply that he would "consult the Committee." Thereupon he would retire into a back room and return in a moment with the answer: "The Committee agrees to accept your offer."

This is apparently what happened with the Theosophical Society and its founder Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. When in doubt she referred to her "Mahatmas" and seldom failed to receive a "Message from the Masters." These Masters were likewise known as the Adept Brothers, the Mysterious Brothers, the Masters of the Wisdom. We are also informed that "the first direct affirmation of the Adepts, Beings perfected spiritually, intellectually and physically, the flower of human and all evolution, is, so far as the Western World is concerned, to be found in the opening sentence of Isis Unveiled."

At this point we might have recourse to that hard hearted exposure of theosophy entitled "Isis Very Much Unveiled; the Story of the Great Mahatma Hoax." We prefer to take this official account of the Theosophical Movement from 1875 to 1925 and note how that "body of knowledge, ancient, constant, and eternal" very much resembled the fictitious committee in the back room. We very much suspect that this remarkable society had its origin in the back of the head of Madame Blavatsky. Instead of being ancient, constant and eternal, it started fifty years ago, was subject to constant changes, and is still evolving new wrinkles, such as the School of the Purple Mother at Point Loma, California.

The Theosophical Society is one of the most ingenious schemes ever concocted. At the top stand the Mahatmas, the Hidden Brothers, the Custodians of the Ancient Knowledge. Next come the Chelas, the inner core of disciples who are the active agents of the Adepts. These form the second section; they are connected with the third section, the exoteric fellows, through the personality of Madame Blavatsky, sometimes called the link, but never the missing link, for she always manages to explain the apparent discrepancies between the esoteric knowledge of the Mahatmas and the exoteric dwellers in Manhattan.

The theosophical structure was one of three sections, but it needed some intermediate machinery to make it work. This was supplied by an interlocking directorate, the Fellows of the Society, and occasionally by an extra agent, a private plenipotentiary, between the founder and the Masters. This is attained by Madame Blavatsky's delegating her authority as she does in the following statement:

. . . The Esoteric Section and its life in the U. S. A. depend upon W. Q. J. remaining its agent and what he now is. The day W. Q. J. resigns, H. P. B. will be virtually dead for the Americans. W. Q. J. is the *Antaskarana* (the "Link") between the two *Manas* (es), the American thought and the Indian—or rather the trans-Himalayan esoteric knowledge *Dixi*. H. P. B. . .

There is nothing as damaging as the original documents. The above is a sample of the numerous statements and orders which Madame Blavatsky "precipitated" upon her followers. It furnishes a prime recipe in the cook book of charlatanry. Take a few phrases from an unknown tongue, mix with a jargon of Babu English, season with a peppering of capital letters, and the connection will be swallowed by thousands of westerners who feel the lure of the East.



Theosophy is one thing, its success another. This success was brought about by several very clever contrivances. There was of course the ancient theosophy with its doctrines of reincarnation, of Karma or retribution, and its various occult phenomena such as levitation of objects and precipitation of letters. These were the so-called lost mysteries of antiquity. How could they be made acceptable in this matter of fact western world? The first step was to attach them to that form of spiritualism current in America in the 'Seventies. But with the discrediting of the Rochester Rappings of the Fox sisters, something less commonplace had to be concocted. The medium for the Wisdom-Religion was now declared to be the Lodge of the Mahatmas, the Mysterious Brothers, otherwise described as spiritual and intelligent Agencies at work behind the scenes of human life. What proof is there of the existence of such beings? As H. P. B. wrote at the time of the *New York Sun* libel suit: "Occult phenomena can never be proved in a court of law during this century."

As the joint authors of this work add:

Messages as well as Messengers must be judged on their phenomenal and moral worth. If the source of any message is metaphysical and transcendental its verification must be looked for on the plane of its origin, not on that of its receipt.

All this might be called the great philosophical alibi. From the messages of the Masters on rice paper, in red ink, precipitated upon Colonel Olcott in mid-ocean to voices in the air speaking to Mrs. Annie Besant none of these is to be subjected to mundane tests such as were demanded by the Society for Psychical Research. No, the esoteric theosophist is supposed to accept all these as evidences of the "New Light that has gone out from the Lodge." But are the Mysterious Brothers, the source of this light, real? Neither their existence nor their non-existence is to be discussed. This dictum of Madame Blavatsky puts the quietus upon the doubting questioner. But the lower orders may be discussed. Thus the Chela or Adept, called the Luminous Youth or Rajah, is known to be fictitious because Mrs. Tingley claims him as her own and Mrs. Tingley has no warrant other than her self-appointed authority seized at the Chicago convention.

Such is the Blavatskian cross word puzzle. Her "ipse dixit" goes; that of her rivals or self-appointed successors does not. All this opens up the final chapter in the history of the Theosophical Society. At the end of fifty years the movement has practically disappeared except for the Purple Mother of Point Loma, Mrs. Tingley herself. Now how this apostolic succession came to be called a "gross and palpable fraud" is most curious. As the authors of this work declare, out of more than six thousand members of The Theosophical Society in America in 1896 less than as many hundred now regard the decaying stump at Point Loma as the theosophical tree.

This volume affords rich reading in the rise and decline of an occult religious movement. While Madame Blavatsky kept her hand on the wheel the car ran pretty well. But the end of the journey was a kind of joy ride where everybody accused everybody else of scandalous conduct. There were serious charges against Madame Blavatsky, against