

The Dark Age Begins Anew

THE WAR ON MODERN SCIENCE. A Short History of the Fundamentalist Attacks on Evolution and Modernism. By MAYNARD SHIPLEY. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927. \$3.

Reviewed by C. K. OGDEN

THAT man was closely related to the more intelligent higher apes seemed to our grandfathers a novel if not an altogether flattering idea. The precise proximity of the relationship remained in doubt, the mechanism of ascent was questioned, but with a new and personal interest in their hypothetical ancestors scientists were able to accumulate a vast body of evidence gratifying both to ape and man. In fact with the publication of the researches of Kohts, Köhler, and Yerkes, and the visual evidence of "Chang," the Scandinavian might be called (*scando* I climb, *avis* ancestor) was in danger of appealing to the heart of the people with hardly less force than Colonel Lindbergh himself, in whom the *avis* and the *avis* somehow get mixed.

Meanwhile, however, the Christians remained unappeased, and Mr. Maynard Shipley, President of the Science League of America, reveals the exact height of their dudgeon. He carries the story of Fundamentalist initiative to the beginning of the present year in the hope of persuading what is envisaged by publishers as "the intelligent reading public" that it lives in two opposing cultures, that we may be heading for a new Dark Age, but that even in death, if Mr. Washburn and Mr. Ford decree that they die, scientists are not divided. On this latter point he quotes the 1925 resolution of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, drawn up by Conklin, Davenport, and Osborn, to the effect that "any legislation attempting to limit the teaching of any scientific doctrine so well established and so widely accepted as the doctrine of evolution would be a profound mistake."

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But to what end? It is now very nearly established,—indeed, we have it on the authority of Professor David Starr Jordan cited at page 392 of the present work,—that Bryan did not read bound books. And even Roxy, who daily in his Cathedral edifies a public greater, probably, than the total circulation of any book reviewed in this issue, vocally addresses millions, stated at the Booksellers' Convention in New York this very spring that he had not read a book for five years. Those who write and read books are a negligible factor in the world of business and of pleasure, and also in the world with which Mr. Shipley is chiefly concerned, that of politics.

Even so, there is no reason why scientists should cut their own throats. Some twenty years ago the late Professor William Bateson (who differed from certain Darwinians as to the phylogenetic technique by which the giraffe got its long neck) was in the habit of saying that in two decades' time the work of Darwin would be regarded as of no significance whatever. His addresses in Canada gave great comfort to Mr. Bryan; yet when the present reviewer pointed this out to him in 1917 he was genuinely unaware of the effect of his unguarded utterances. Expostulation prevailed, and in the 1926 "Encyclopædia Britannica" will be found his last word: "It should be stated explicitly," he says, "that the lines of argument converging to support the theory of common origin are so forcible and so many that no alternative can be entertained. The geological record is conclusive." And again: "Common descent, though rarely a proposition demonstrable in any detail, ranks as an axiom."

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Fundamentalism might be relied upon not to claim Professor Bateson as an ally after such a pronouncement were it not for the more recent case of Professor Osborn. The latter had only to air his derogatory view that the animal ancestors of man were not the intelligent apes we were learning to understand and respect but some very much lower and possibly hairier creature, and he was promptly hailed as a deliverer and a prophet.

To return to the Washburn-Ford possibilities. The Chief Fundamentalist organization, "The Supreme Kingdom," was developed in conference with Bryan by Roscoe Carpenter, of Indianapolis, who in 1926 reported that he had been "in close contact

with Henry Ford, who is also opposed to the teaching of evolution." And who is Mr. Washburn? He is head of "The Washburn Interests," which have a capitalization of \$2,000,000, with offices in Boston, New York, and Clearwater. He declares that he would "rather be known as founder of the Bible Crusaders than be President of these United States." Mr. Washburn has said "We have forces enough and are strong enough, if united, to overwhelm the enemy. We must unite to win." The Supreme Kingdom tends to appeal to those who delight in secret societies; Mr. Washburn works out in the open. It is true that Anti-evolution laws have just been defeated in six States,—Oklahoma, West Virginia, Arkansas, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Minnesota. But in Tennessee and Mississippi the teaching of evolution in public educational institutions is illegal. In Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Kentucky, all references to evolution have been deleted from the State's textbooks. Elsewhere teachers have lost their positions or have been intimidated, and Mr. Shipley thinks that though Pennsylvania and Michigan are fairly safe, Kentucky, Texas, and North Carolina are again in great peril even on the major issue.

Is America, then, behind the rest of the world? We are reminded that in Bootle, England, a town much larger than Dayton, no teacher dared defy an Inquisition similar to that which made the name of Scopes almost as famous as that of Stopes. No wonder Mr. Frank R. Kent came to the conclusion, after a trip from coast to coast, that America is "at the start of another such fight as we had over Prohibition." No wonder Mr. Katterfeld decided to launch a journal called *Evolution* from Fifth Avenue this year. No wonder Mr. Shipley threatens us with a new Dark Age, "unless," in the words of John Emerson Roberts, "those who are free get into the fight and help defend the freedom that has been won for them." At least he has thereby done part of his bit.

A Live Prophet?

CARLYLE AT HIS ZENITH (1848-53). By DAVID ALEC WILSON. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1927. \$5.

THOMAS CARLYLE. By MARY AGNES HAMILTON. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1927.

Reviewed by GERALD CARSON

EACH year since 1923 another volume in D. A. Wilson's life of Carlyle has appeared and ranged itself gravely with its fellows. Now four in number, these books await two more additions before the work, worthy in scope and minuteness to associate with Boswell's Johnson or the Buckle-Monypenny Disraeli or the Lockhart Scott, comes to its termination.

With the French Revolution and his Cromwell behind him, and Mrs. Welsh's property in hand, Carlyle comes on the stage again—it is now 1848—in fine fettle, very brusk, whimsical, stalking through society and rather enjoying, as Dr. Johnson did, the sport which offers when the weak and inoffensive put themselves in a position to be annihilated.

Nor were great names, both living and dead, neglected when the master felt his audience worthy of a harangue. Within a few pages Carlyle pours contumely and scorn upon Wordsworth, Petrarch, Trollope, Jane Austen, Bulwer-Lytton, Goldsmith, Keats; and Mr. Wilson, too, riding after like a Scottish fury, enjoys the slaughter of reputations immensely, and cuts and slashes bravely among the Victorian infantry. It is all very lively and exhilarating and tart with the real flavor of personality.

Carlyle was now famous and enjoyed the privilege, which he frequently exercised, of silencing any other dinner guest in London. That must be why Mr. Wilson titled this volume "Carlyle at his Zenith" for his production during the period treated here—the "Latter-Day Pamphlets," the "John Sterling," and the beginning of "Frederick"—certainly does not represent his most influential work. During these years, too, Carlyle was much occupied with newspaper articles on political subjects, admonishing his fellow countrymen, and reading the *Acta Sanctorum*, where he said he found much English history.

One of the many classifications into which people may be arbitrarily resolved is this one; those who take life easy, and those who take it hard. Carlyle

took it hard. Mr. Wilson, true to the spirit of his original, does not make biography too easy. His method which is to proceed through the use of hundreds of short flashes toward a complete Carlyle, needs increasingly the services of a continuity man to keep one straight and give the work some thread of narrative.

The only thing to do with Wilson is to get a compass and strike out, intending to live upon the country. This book, like its fellows, is very dense and the trail is poorly marked. But everybody who ever came into Carlyle's life gets into Mr. Wilson's pages, and we are indebted to him for collecting many vivid contemporary accounts of the great nineteenth century prophet both in monologue and in his rare moments of repose.

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As time goes on it is natural that we should get more of Mr. Wilson himself. In that we gain only moderately. He has his own complete set of prejudices which never lack nourishment. He says obviously unfair things of Emerson. His disparagement of Mrs. Carlyle, long established, is still unextinguished. He speaks jauntily of Sterling's religious and intellectual life as "political measles" and "religious mumps." And throughout his chapters, like a silver thread, runs a petulant nagging at all the orthodox forms of Christian belief which annoy him as they could only annoy an old Victorian skeptic of the hard-shell type. But for the reader who does not mind occasional choler in his biographer, when it is joined with deep sympathy for the subject and with immense erudition, and for the reader capable of composing Mr. Wilson's splashy palette-knife effects into the true picture, this biography will be stimulating and diverting. It will long remain an impressive monument to Thomas Carlyle and the Victorian England against which he stormed and raged.

The intention and accomplishment of Mary Agnes Hamilton is wholly different from that of D. A. Wilson. Knowing well that Carlyle now belongs almost wholly to the "survey" courses in English Literature and to the historical student in the seminars, she meets the issue squarely; why, today, should Carlyle be read? and answers with two reasons, "First, as he himself put it, 'Great men, taken up in any way, are profitable company,' and he is as great a man as any his country has produced, with a personality of beautiful and arresting definiteness of outline. Second, his work, admittedly literature, contains stuff of much interest and import for us; more, indeed, for us, even than for the generation to whom it was addressed."

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To extend the offensive position Mrs. Hamilton has indicated, Carlyle is near the mind of today because he was concerned with our twentieth century problems. We are in a muddle over the important issues of life—religion, politics, personal relations—and Carlyle's books, informed with positive spirit, afford answers pertinent and true, expressed in a speech whose broken rhythms are "nearer to ours than to that of the mid-Victorian."

Here is the theme and purpose, clearly announced. It is an excellent 202 pages, written with verve and a bracing intellectual enthusiasm, filled with some of Carlyle's own ardor, filled with a fine sense of the larger human motives, with "romance and passion, the color of blood and tears." If Mrs. Hamilton can hitch modern readers up to Carlyle again, and recreate his personality in the memory of a generation which knows not David, here, be assured, is the sort of writing to do it.

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Conflicting Methods

THE ART OF HISTORY, a Study of Four Great Historians of the Eighteenth Century. By J. B. BLACK. New York: F. S. Crofts & Co. 1926. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ARTHUR W. COLTON.

THERE seem to be two insurgent movements current now among historians. One of them represented by Messrs. Beard, Turner, James Harvey Robinson, and of course many others, is perhaps in a fair way to win the field, perhaps might be called "sociological history," or perhaps that is not the proper phrase. At any rate it is insurgent against the theory that history is nothing but past politics and the doings of conspicuous persons. Professor Beard looks to economics for the sources of the Constitution as well as of the subsequent growth of democracy. The most important work on Roman history to appear within recent months is, I suppose, Professor Rostovtzeff's "Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire." To Professor Turner the great protagonists of American history are not Washington and Lincoln but the Continent and the Frontier. To Professor Robinson history, in the larger sense, is "the vague and comprehensive science of past human affairs;" but for all general histories, or for general readers (especially for school text books and popular compendiums) one must select; his quarrel with the old or conventional history is that it selects the wrong thing and leaves out the really vital and significant. It gives too much attention to military matters and the trifling details of dynasties. "Man is more than a warrior or subject or princely ruler; the state is by no means his sole interest." Moreover it is sensational; it selects only the extraordinary episodes and prodigious occurrences, the picturesque and the lurid; it omits the normal.

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The other movement is a protest against the doctrine that the whole duty of the historian is to dig up facts. Without minimizing the value of original documents, or the work done by the reigning school of historical research, or subscribing altogether to such doctrines as that "history is philosophy teaching by example," this protest would maintain that—whether history can in any proper sense be called a science or not—the writing of history is an art, and the better rather than the worse for having a purpose and a point of view.

The American Historical Association some time since appointed a committee to report on the question why history, which was once almost the favorite reading of educated men, has ceased to be so; and a small volume has lately appeared entitled "the Writing of History," containing essays on the question by members of that Committee, namely, Messrs. Jusserand, Abbott, Colby, and Bassett, the burden of which is that it is because history is no longer (or seldom), but ought to be (at least some of it), written as literature. Professor Black, in the volume before us answers the question, rather more substantially, to the same general effect. Research is not the whole thing. When a historian appears who can write with as much power and form as Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, or Macaulay, he will be read.

The query that arises here is whether these two insurgent doctrines are not likely sometime to clash with each other. Professor Robinson maintains that institutions can be made interesting, and of course they can be. To many readers they are in themselves. But one may doubt whether they are naturally, to most readers, as interesting as persons; whether Professor Robinson's proposal to discard the picturesque and prodigious in favor of the normal is not likely to make history less read rather than more; whether the man who wants history to be a literature or an art, and the man who wants it to deal with economics, mass movements, and the shift of custom—whether these two can agree with one another any better than with the predecessors against whose methods each has respectively rebelled. It is true that one school criticizes the substance of history as it has been selected, and the other the form as it has been written. Still it would be safer to hope for harmony than to prophesy it.

Professor Black reviews the work of Voltaire, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon. He notes the surprising accuracy of Voltaire, the erudition behind that flickering and flashing pen; how the bias of

Hume grew out of his philosophy; how the theory of the unchangeable uniformity of human nature makes interpretations of character inadequate, makes history a repeating decimal, and vitiates both Hume's and Voltaire's conception of the past. Robertson has

none of Voltaire's brilliance, or Hume's philosophic depth, or Gibbon's incisive learning; he is often ponderous, prolix, and sententious. His purity of diction is incontestable and its very sobriety imparts dignity—but the impression he creates depends primarily on his accuracy and general truthfulness.

Professor Black is no panegyrist of these eighteenth century historians. He is severely critical of Hume, and points to the flaws of even Gibbon's magnificent style. But he has in some sense exemplified, as well as advised, that history may be well written as well as well founded, by these studies of four men, who, writing history better than it had been written for fifteen years and better than it has usually been written since, enjoyed a kind of vogue to which modern historians are not accustomed.

Aspects of Criticism

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CRITICISM. Selected and Arranged by JAMES CLOYD BOWMAN. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1927.

CURRENT REVIEWS. Edited by LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH. The same.

Reviewed by C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

PROFESSOR BOWMAN finds that there are five aspects of critical attitude about which there is considerable controversy in the United States at present. They are: "disagreement over the place of nationality and tradition," the purpose of criticism, the moral aspect of literature, the exact meaning of realism, and the matter of beauty of form. About these five points most of the essays collected in this anthology revolve. All of the essays are familiar, but it is significant that reading the volume is not a task, for all of the points really live.

Of course no one will ever formulate a universally acceptable solution to any of these problems. Indeed, one of the things that makes criticism interesting is the fact that almost any well-reasoned position is defensible. There are minds that cannot admit this patent fact, and they are the minds that ardently defend one particular position, and denigrate all others. This leads to some wonderfully interesting writing, but I doubt that it advances the writers' causes very much, or hinders the other fellow's. Criticism, perhaps fortunately, is not an exact science. I often wonder whether I am right in thinking that nine-tenths of the consuming interest the active mind has in criticism would not evaporate if literature became as exact as, say, mathematics.

To be sure the sciences are going to contribute much to the development of a relatively more scientific literary criticism, and in this movement the writings of I. A. Richards are of prime importance. As I understand it, too, one of the prime interests of M. Paul Valéry is to investigate the possibilities of a science of literature, a development of his interest in the science of mind. If criticism does become an exact science it will come through its absorption by psychology and sociology.

Even so the science of criticism would not encompass the whole field of criticism. At best it will be able only to deal with such problems as the genesis of art, the psychology of the artistic personality, the mechanism of expression, the emotional value of words and phrases (investigated in Richard's "Meaning of Meaning"), and related topics. There would still remain the whole question of one's attitude toward life. And on philosophy or *weltanschauung*, there is little prospect of universal agreement. The dominant critics of the day, for instance, are preaching the necessity for release. They want expression; they identify repression with disease. But the older critics combat that very thing and we find Irving Babbitt saying flatly that "civilization, at bottom, rests on the recognition of the fact that man shows his true liberty by resisting impulse, and not by yielding to it, that he grows in the perfection proper to his own nature not by throwing off but by taking on limitations."

This is very pleasant and reassuring for even if all the rest of the world is reduced to mechanism

by science there will still be a chance to beguile one's mind with perhaps futile and irrelevant but nevertheless entertaining speculation. Only of course it gives one cause to remember that even one's attitude will eventually be explained in terms of hormones, or unconscious mind, or something. There will be no escaping science. The world will be thoroughly comprehended—and dull. Nevertheless my allegiance to science does not waver.

But if criticism falls victim to the dead hand of exact mechanistic science there is no danger that book reviewing will. Book reviewers as creatures of whimsy and perversity will hold out longer than the critics. I mean by and large. To be sure a pioneering writer is apt to get good book reviews long before he wins to the position of having a good critical essay written about him. But book reviewers are not ordinarily very learned writers. Book reviews are pretty much trash.

If proof be needed turn to Professor Smith's "Current Reviews." It is a dismal and disappointing book. A good many important writers are represented in the volume, but still book reviewing is obviously not in the best of hands. I don't think there is one important and interesting review in the collection that was not written by a man better known in some other field. A professional book reviewer is nine times out of ten a hack.

It is just that circumstance that makes book reviewing so depressing. Comment on a book is only interesting when the man who wrote the comment is interesting, and who ever heard of an interesting hack? In these days one could write book reviews for twenty years and at the end of that time, be in a worse condition, intellectually, than when one started. And most book reviewers who remain at the occupation don't start with much.

Book reviewing is usually done hurriedly and consequently superficially. Journalists are peculiarly adapted to it. Critics are not. When the two types meet in one personality we get some interesting results. When the man behind the review is interesting, so is the review. Too often there is no man behind the review.

How to Write Short Stories

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF ANTON TCHEKHOV. Translated and edited by S. S. KOTELIANSKY and PHILIP TOMLINSON. New York: George H. Doran. 1927.

THE LETTERS OF ANTON TCHEKHOV TO OLGA L. KNIPPER. Translated from the Russian by CONSTANCE GARNETT. The same.

ANTON TCHEKHOV: Literary and Theatrical Reminiscences. Translated and edited by S. S. KOTELIANSKY. The same.

Reviewed by PETER A. SOROKIN
University of Minnesota

THESE three volumes portray Chekhov as a man, as a writer, as a thinker, and as a citizen. "Ah, what a beautiful, magnificent man; modest and quite like a girl! And he walks like a girl. He is simply wonderful!" These words of Leo Tolstoy about Chekhov grasp the essential characteristics of Chekhov as a man. Honest with himself and other men; modest and bashful, like a girl; human in the best sense of the word; free from any hypocrisy, with a wonderfully balanced integrity of personality, Chekhov represents the best type of the Russian intelligentsia or the Educated Men, as he himself styles the group of the real intellectuals (see his remarkable letter "Who Are the Educated Men and What Are Their Characteristics?"). Chekhov's letters and the reminiscences of him by Tolstoy, Bunin, Kuprin, Gorky, Andreyev, Stanislavsky, and others, given in these volumes, unanimously stress these traits of Chekhov's personality and depict to us a genuine intellectual at his very best.

To the understanding of Chekhov as a writer his letters are an indispensable source. They better than any critical essay about him show the technique, the purposes, the characteristics, and the nature of his writing. Many of the letters can properly be styled the best essays in "How to Write a Short Story." Chekhov is a realist *par excellence*. Being such, he is an objectivist to such a degree that I am tempted to style him one of the most prominent representatives of a genuine behaviorism in literature and story writing. As to the technique