

fell the healing art in the darkest ages, it is not our pleasure to explore. It is rather our interest to inquire: "What is medicine capable of in our own time and how did she come by her inherited stock of ideas?"

The structure of the organized medical sciences as existing to-day would seem to disavow her ancient struggle with such lusty adversaries as superstition, theurgy, and magic. Very well, let us accept Dr. Singer's leadership in that mood. Following the gleam, he will take us by quick stages from the origins of Greek medicine to the rebirth of science in northern Italy in the sixteenth century. Early and medieval medicine occupy, in this volume, about one quarter of the text—a just proportion. The modern period, from 1700 to date, receives preponderant attention, as it should. The cell-theory, germ origin of disease, anæsthesia and its effect upon surgery, immunity, tropical medicine, and new physiological concepts call for extended discussion. The interpretation of collective medical data is dwelt upon at some length and then the volume closes with an interesting Epilogue—a glance at the tasks confronting the medical profession.

As a rapid non-technical statement of the gradual application of the rational method of observation and experiment in medicine Dr. Singer's work is the best that we have seen. A host of good illustrations admirably supplement the text. The make-up, as usual with Oxford Press publications, is beyond reproach.

The Moses of the Talmud

THE LIFE OF MOSES. By EDMOND FLEG.
Translated from the French by STEPHEN HADEN
GUEST. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1928.

Reviewed by CHARLES C. TORREY
Yale University

IT should be said at the outset that this is not the sort of biography to which we are accustomed in a series of "Great Men of Israel," or "Heroes of the Nations." It belongs to a very different class of literature, for it is a collection and artistic reshaping of the ancient Jewish legend, folklore, and mystical speculation concerning Moses, obtained chiefly from the Talmud, but also from other Rabbinical writings. Both author and translator have from their childhood been familiar with all this literature, and they know how to impart its peculiar flavor. Edmond Fleg is a poet as well as a scholar, and his translator who seems to share both qualities, has interpreted with perhaps not more loss than was inevitable. The English rendering employs the language of the Authorized Version in the comparatively small portion of the story derived from the Old Testament, and aims to retain its formal idiom throughout. In this the translator has done wisely. There are a few obscure passages, and even slips in the English employed, but as a whole the narrative is smooth and impressive. One or two selections will serve to show its nature.

The child Moses, at the end of his third year, has snatched the crown from Pharaoh's head, and is thereupon subjected to an ordeal, in the presence of the court and of the two prophets, Job and Balaam. "Let two dishes be presented to him," said Balaam: "Upon the one let there be scattered burning coals; upon the other pieces of gold. If he take the coal, thy crown is safe—he knows not what he does. But if he take the gold, fear him; he has understanding." . . . Moses grasped a lighted coal and carried it to his mouth. Wherefore, say our Rabbies, he was slow of speech and of a slow tongue all the days of his life.

Moses ascends to the seventh heaven to receive instruction, and must needs pass by the consuming fire of Sandalfon, angel of prayer, who weaves crowns for the Holy One, blessed be He. "When Moses saw Sandalfon, his eyes melted to tears and his soul to terror, and he would have thrown himself from the cloud-top into the abyss. . . . And when he had passed before Rigjion, who examines the secrets of the Eternal, and before Gelizur, who proclaims His decrees Moses entered the School of the Most High. There in semi-circles the angels are ranged, and the angel Zagzagel teaches them the Torah."

To those who wish to know something of the atmosphere of the Rabbinical literature, with its allegories, its fantastic imaginings, and its many high spiritual conceptions, this "Life" is to be recommended.



To My Black Kitten

I

TO you who vex me while I write
And at my pen do gently bite,
To you I will this verse indite.

It seems to me when I am dead
And centuries passed above my head

That I myself might think in trees
And sculpture nature's majesties
Carved in rock and changing seas.
I could conceive of all of these—
One of those angels that rehearse
Their dramas in the universe—
Whose moods are days and whose great hands
Embodied are in seas and lands.

Yes, I could be without a doubt
One of those angels that greatly shout
Planning tall hills and sunsets out.
But only God's Mother getting to sleep
The Eternal Babe would think to make
A little foolish thing like you!
Such are the things that mothers do.

Sometimes when in angelic skies
The great antiphonals arise
Of archangelic melodies,
I'll say, "On earth and far away
Those are hills that last a day."

And when with glorious battle shout
They shake great Heaven inside out
I'll say "On earth and very far
That cry turns to a falling star."
But when through praises, prayers, and pities
I hear the rhymes of ancient ditties,
Nursery songs to please God's Son
In Heaven the very Littlest One
Then will I say "Those are the kitties."

In you a sign to us is given
To show that there is fun in Heaven.

II

Before Abraham was, I Am—

Upon the knees of His great Dam
Pretended that he was a Lamb
And she would call Him "Little Lamb."
No sooner were they made than they
Straightway did begin to play.
While playing still His innocent game
How innocent to earth He came.
Him—playing still the Lamb of God
They caught and bruised with many a rod—
And killed Him for His lovely game.

Then earth did heave, the sky did rock
And Heaven itself received the shock.

He who loves not innocent play
He cannot breathe on Judgment Day.
Earth will not come to end at last
Through cataclysms strange and vast
But by exquisite deep games,
Salvation just by changing names.

The deepest power that we know
Is "Heigh Ho my Deary O"

Ring games are the fiery pit
In which perish the unfit.

Nothing so disturbs the devil
As the sound of innocent revel.

Mary and Jehovah will disclose
The funny things that Jesus does.

And tall archangels hear those things
And rustle their amused great wings.

When God comes in His great state
The foolish shall confound the great.

As darling children charm away
All that is less sweet than they
We'll be saved by God's sweet play.

And earth shall come to an end at last
With laughter rich and warm and vast.

III

To you who vex me while I write
And at my pen do gently bite,
To you I will this verse indite.

All through my flesh and through and through
The Holy Child enjoys you too.

I laugh to Him and He to me
Enraptured with your infancy.

My heart knows well that you and He
Gamboled together at God's knee.

God Himself has not refused
To be exquisitely amused.

He loves you for your lovely fur
And listens closely for your purr.

Yes, Heaven is exquisite with fun
The laughter of the Three-in-One—

When they behold the Heavenly Boy
Playing games of childish joy.

Playing he is a Happy Door
With welcome for the weak and poor.

Playing he is a Loaf of Bread
By which the frail are comforted.

Playing He is the Living Tree
Danced around by you and me!

All through my flesh—yes through and through
The Holy Child enjoys you too.

To a Dog

I

IF there is no God for thee
Then there is no God for me

If He sees not when you share
With the poor your frugal fare,

Does not see you at a grave,
Every instinct bred to save;

As if you were the only one
Believing in a resurrection;

When you wait, as lovers do,
Watching till your friend comes true;

Does not reverence when you take
Angry words for love's sweet sake;

If his eye does not approve
All your faith and pain and love;

If the heart of justice fail
And is for you of no avail;

If there is no heaven for thee
Then there is no heaven for me.

II

If the Lord they tell us of
Died for men yet loves not love,

If from out His Paradise
He shuts the innocent and wise,

The gay, obedient, simple, good,
The docile ones, of friendly mood,

Those who die to save a friend
Heavenly faithful to the end;

If there is no cross for thee
Then there is no cross for me.

III

If its boughs reach not so high
That they bowed star and sky,

If its roots are not so sound
That they cleave the heavy ground,

If it thrills not through all Nature
Plunged through every living creature,

If its leaves do not enmesh
Every bit of groaning flesh,

If it strike not its mighty spur
Through fang and claw and tooth and fur
Piercing tree and earth and stone,
Then indeed I stand alone.

Nothing less than this can save
Me, from out my fleshly grave,

Me, in whom such jungles are
Where the beasts go out to war.

If there is no God for thee
Then there is no God for me.

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH.

The BOWLING GREEN

Pulling Seaweed

I SUPPOSE it is valuable, for intellectual reasons, that a man's life should be as much of a paradox as possible. It has always amused me to observe that though all my best instincts are for lethargy, quietism, postponement and concentration, I usually find myself in a hurry. What an accurate word is *distracted*, for if I pause to examine my mind I can usually find it subject to various diverse tensions. Perhaps that is well: like the outer ligatures of a spider's web these help to keep the central gossamers of the spirit from collapsing into a silky tangle. And though theoretically I abhor the business of being in a hurry, yet I must be honest enough to confess that often it is in that condition I find myself happiest. And how, otherwise, would the occasional interludes of exquisite indolence be so perfect? Evidently there is some deep necessity for life to be as full of opposites as possible.

During an autumn of exceptional hurry my mind has often turned back to an afternoon of amazing peace. It was in early September, on a beach on Long Island Sound. First let me explain that there is some notable virtue in owning a small frontage on actual tide-water, because to feel some proprietary right in the perpetual movement of the tides seems to put one in relation with huge things. The whole turn and tension of the cosmos is apparent there on your own shore; and that of itself is enough to keep you aware of enormity. On this drowsy afternoon, while the family sprawled on the sand or capered among the boulders, I was thigh-deep in warm golden water, pulling up masses of seaweed. Air and water were so exactly the same temperature that it was almost impossible to say how much of you was in and how much out. In the clarity of those green and tawny shallows thick clumps of weed wavered softly, and when, after strong pulling, they came up from their rocky fixture, they crackled and seethed in the hands. The water, running out through all that tangle of rubbery cells and fibres, makes a most curious spongy hissing. Those masses of seaweed were full of innumerable small five-pointed stars. September, it appears, is kindergarten time among the echinoderms, and every tress of seaweed carries in it dozens of baby starfish, perhaps a quarter of an inch across. One could not help believing that there was some considerable meaning in this—they were like tiny pentameter epigrams. But on such wise afternoons one does not explore too fiercely for meanings. One observes and is content.

The chief danger in being so busy, and consequently so absorbed in one's own notions, is that one forgets that others are equally under pressure, equally absorbed. And in making liberal allowance for one's own preoccupation he forgets to make adequate obeisance to other people's. I suppose that what I am really leading up to is the annual Apology with which the Bowling Green always ends its calendar year: apology for letters unanswered, duties neglected, stamps unreturned, manuscripts unread. Apologies, of course, are always impossible; there is no apology for anything. At this very moment, trying to get on with these paragraphs, I was interrupted by the telephone, and was indignant to find it a call for Stella, our cheerful Polish maid; and then I remembered that Stella also means a star and has her own necessities to twinkle. So I suppose that in the thickest tangles of daily seaweed these youthful starfish are lurking. Abbé Dimnet, in his charming book, *The Art of Thinking* (an admirable New Year's gift for anyone who is at all interested in the excitements of the mind, and particularly for teachers or parents), retells the familiar old story of the Spanish sailors becalmed off the mouth of the Amazon and dying of thirst. "They could not believe the natives signalling that the water all round their ship was good to drink and they had only to throw down their buckets."

I was amused the other day, re-reading Leonard Merrick's "Conrad in Quest of His Youth" which I had not read for some fourteen years to find that his hero who thought himself so elderly and went wistfully to try to revive early romances, was ac-

tually 37. The comedy was that when I first read that book I supposed it quite natural that a man of 37 should consider himself pretty elderly; whereas I know now that 37 (or even 38) is only the beginning of the real fun. No one reckons age by years anyhow, but by receptiveness to new ideas. Even if one always marks the end of a calendar by making apologies for one's errors, it is not in any ignorance of the unlikelihood that those errors can be mended. Abbé Dimnet very wisely counsels us to try to cultivate and intensify those of our moods which we know to be most essentially us:—

There is in us a stratum more sensitive than the rest, which we know and where we can go at will. A behaviorist would say that the inevitability of the response from that stratum in our consciousness proves that it is biological, but all I want to say is that we know from experience that the response is sure. If we live a great deal with ourselves we increase our personality, and if we revive certain facts or periods, or phases of feeling in our lives, we heighten our receptivity.

Our life with its peaks—which we know—of sentiment, effort, nobility, or increased intelligence, is a veritable mine of evocative moods. A few minutes' leisure is enough to replace ourselves in such moods, and no sooner are we conscious of them than the phosphorescence of intuitiveness begins. Poets know it well. Their own experience, sometimes woefully restricted in appearance, is the constant support of their inspiration. They, as well as artists are remarkably like children, and have never broken the thread binding the various periods of their lives together, as men living in the world, and for the world, will do.

But alas, as every student of *moeurs* is aware, it is usually just after visiting those upper slopes of the spirit, and resolving to build a bungalow there, that our worst landslides of conduct go roaring down into a crevasse.

It is odd to think, concerning so wise and winning and unpretentious a little book as Abbé Dimnet's, that most of those who might most benefit by it will never hear of it. It does not clench its brows in contortion like the *Penseur* of the august Rodin (that old faker). One reason, incidentally, why I now suspect that Rodin wasn't really so very much of an artist is because when I was twenty-two I thought him so tremendous. I suspect that if at 38 you still feel about things as you did at 22, something is wrong.

So we end the year's notebook as usual, in the frenzy and fragrance of Just Before Christmas, with the Apologies of the Season—apology for occasional eruption from duty, for slips of temper and imperfect cadences in prose. You will remember, I hope, the sagest and most perennial of all human sayings—*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*. But remember too that a pen is not a jade in harness. It is a feather, lifted on the wind.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

The Canadian Nation

A HISTORY OF CANADA. By CARL WITTKÉ.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1928.

Reviewed by W. P. M. KENNEDY
University of Toronto

IT is always a difficult undertaking to give within a single volume anything like an adequate view of the historical development of a nation, and, as a general rule, the task is all the more difficult for a foreign scholar. When then an historian from the United States attempts such a work for Canada he is faced with these initial handicaps. In addition, because there are so many likenesses between the two nations which are really differences, so many traditions which are apparently common, but have in fact diverged in actual life, it is always possible to make grave errors in interpretation. Finally, Canadian history is complicated in spite of its superficial simplicity and there is always the risk of missing the true meaning of the varied forces which have made the Dominion of Canada.

It is a fine story, shot through with romance and poetry, with faith and despair, with dreams and disappointments, with comedy and tragedy. Here are colonial projects in which humble settlers rub shoulders with the great statesmen of Europe. Here are bold navigators and voyagers and illiterate savages. Here France and England fought out their age-long duel. Here the American Revolution left an indelible imprint in the Loyalists and in a mistaken attempt to prevent a similar disruption which in turn issued in the Canadian Rebellions. Here Austrian sovereignty and mercantilist theory met the persistent attacks of colonial political reformers and colonial fiscal autonomists. Here were solved

the relationships between cabinet government and federalism, between nationhood and empire. Here a frontier slowly moved to the Pacific driven forward by the faith and vision of the railway builders. Here have been dramatic developments in economic life. Here has been that ghastly test of war for a young nation sixty years old: an historical canvas rich in human experience.

Professor Wittke has then undertaken to tell a story rich in accomplishments, shot through with problems, pregnant with snares, and he has carried it out with eminent success. His book is no mere *tour de force*, for he has lectured with distinction for many years on Canadian history. He knows the literature and sources of his subject as a scholar and he approaches his purpose with an objective and judicial mind. We may say at once that his volume will not only be of great value to readers in the United States but that citizens of Canada will do well to read it and to see themselves through foreign eyes.

Professor Wittke writes with modesty in presentation and on the whole with a fine sense of proportion. Perhaps he is weakest in the history of the Maritime Provinces which do not receive from him their due weight in treatment and their rightful place in influence—a fault, however, which he shares with many Canadian writers. However that may be, he moves with extraordinary security amid his material and his obvious intimate acquaintance with it rescues his book from the dangers of mere historical description and from labored prose. It is true that there is no fine writing in the book, and that a sense of restraint seems evident even when moments of historical drama are under review. On the other hand the style is clear and practical and the reader can follow the developments with interest and with ease.

In addition it is of exceptional value to watch a foreign scholar attempting to get beneath the surface and to disclose something of Canada's cultural life, its nationhood and civilization. In this connexion, Professor Wittke writes frankly, but with courtesy and dignity. He cannot, for example, but see how influences from the United States have worked into Canadian life, but he strikes a fine balance in estimating their import and importance. Where the superficial writer would see peaceful penetration and deduce political significance, where the inexpert observer would find something to glory over in the apparent extension of the importance of his own country, Professor Wittke rightly observes "inevitable" likenesses as "continental" phenomena due to common cultural, economic, and geographical factors. At the same time he has fully grasped the meaning of Canada's unmistakable foundations in its own political integrity.

Most remarkable perhaps is the author's skill in dealing with the years since 1914. It is not too much to say that his success here is remarkable. Without offence, but with courage and judgment he has presented the tangled political, social, and economic history in chapters of singular objectivity. I do not mean to imply that I agree with all his interpretations; what I do wish to emphasize is his fine effort in writing contemporary history.

Finally the book is not only a scholarly and welcome addition to an excellent and beautiful series, but it is symptomatic. Every day we hear of wider teaching of Canadian history in the United States, and each year brings an increasing number of scholars to Canadian archives. These phenomena are of inestimable importance. Professor Wittke, thank goodness, has nothing to say of "the unguarded line," of "blood will tell" of "common inheritances"; but his book itself speaks much for that community of learning which knows no frontiers and it is a valuable contribution to that structure of mutual knowledge and understanding which is the best of all guarantees of enduring friendships between two nations under permanent and inviolate political separation.

"What rich associations," says John O'London's *Weekly*, "surrounded the old watermill at Grantchester, Cambridgeshire, which was recently destroyed by fire. It dated from 1280, and was one of the most valued possessions of Merton College, Oxford. Chaucer knew it and mentioned it in his works. It is believed to have inspired Tennyson to write 'The Miller's Daughter.' Rupert Brooke lived only a few score yards away, and in his famous poem, 'Grantchester,' refers to the mill's literary associations."