



Conducted by MARION PONSONBY

Bud on Trash

By DOROTHY CANFIELD

"OH Gosh! Let 'em have trash, Mother, all they want, and get enough of it!"

So spoke with Olympian adolescent certainty the boy with a book under his arm. He had blundered into the room where, over the tea-cups, an anxious adult discussion about books for children was being held between his mother and the conscientious librarian of the local library.

"But Bud, trash—those silly wild-west stories—they're so frightfully untrue to life," protested the librarian.

"Oh, so long as they don't know it's trash, it doesn't hurt them!" said the sixteen-year-old mentor, "and as soon as they get wise to it, they drop it."

He sat down, reaching a St. Bernard paw across the sandwich plate. A metaphysical idea seemed fluttering an iridescent wing over the tea-table. The boy's mother looked at him as he sat, carelessly dropping the small lady-sandwiches into his mouth as if they were nickels and he a slot-machine, and reflected that, sure enough, the house was no longer littered with Tarzans, Four-Motor-Boat-Boys, nor Tom Swifts. And this was a change for which his family could take no credit. Family fulminations against them, and family exhortations to read at least one of the classics for children, had rattled for years about his ears. But as long as he had wanted to read the "Boy Scouts of the Amazon River," that was what he had read. Remembering this, his mother felt an unwilling admiration for his strength of purpose.

And now, moved by some inner rhythm of his own, he had turned into somebody else, sat up late reading "The Last of the Vikings," glued himself to "Red Rust," had to be torn away from a book describing Cretan excavations, had loaned the family "Henry Esmond" to his best friend, and—what was the book under his arm now? "Clayhanger!"

If only, she thought, the processes of the young were conscious enough so that you could ask them straight out how such things happened! But, of course, buried in subconscious reflexes as these mysteries were—(she was quite a modern mother).

Bud robustly set about unreeling reflexes from his interior with as careless a nonchalance as a conjuror pulling rabbits out of hats; "I bet a nickel the reason you jump on trash for kids so much is because you've forgotten what fairy-stories made like when you believe them. Now I can remember, just as well, when I did believe every word of them. When the Giant got after Hop o' my Thumb, it scared my gizzard out, almost. I used to hope—oh, till I was quite a big kid going to school—that a Brownie would come and do things for me at night. I've taken the cat's saucer of milk and set it in my room for the Brownie, many's the night. Well, you know how fairy stories are—something exciting happening every minute. When it isn't a toad jumping out of somebody's mouth, it's a bird telling you how to double-cross the witch that's laying for you, or an ogre big enough to hop the ocean in one jump."

"But"—said the librarian, shocked, "what a literal, unimaginative way to take fairy stories. They're folk-lore!"

"How did you suppose kids took them?" inquired Bud. "I bet kids take them the way the folks that made them up meant them to be taken, too." His mother scented a repressed fear, grievance—what is it that is repressed? Oh, yes, a repressed complex, lurking under Bud's brawny exterior. "Why, son," she said anxiously, "did I do wrong to give you fairy-stories to read? Do you think children get false ideas of life from them?"

Bud swept the contents of the bonbon dish into one palm, eating as he talked. "Gosh no!" he affirmed. "Kids little enough for fairy-stories—you couldn't give them any ideas about life, true or false, because they haven't got any experience to hook it onto. What would you give 'em to read? They don't know enough about folks yet to have any interest in them, surely."

"But look here," said his mother in some bewilderment. "How'd we get to talking

about fairy-stories, anyhow? I thought we were talking about trash."

"Well, this is the way I size it up. After a while, even a kid can see that fairy-tales aren't so. He never does see a giant, no Brownie ever comes 'round to play with him, no bird ever tells him a darned thing, and the only thing that ever drops out of his mouth is a tooth. And that's where he gets through with fairy-tales."

"But is he ready for real books yet? Guess again. He's all geared up to the kind of goings-on he's had in fairy-tales. What little Rollo does, tagging after Grandpa on the farm, sounds like pretty poor pickings after throwing down a hair from a Giant's beard and having it turn into a sea. What that kid is looking for is fairy-tales about real things. He still doesn't know much about real things, and it doesn't bother him any that Tom Swift always comes out on top, and that the Motor-Boat Boys do explorations with one hand that would have tied Stefansson up in knots. So he gives himself a good, long course in trash! But all the time this kid keeps getting more sense knocked into him, keeps seeing over and over how real folks really act and what they honest-to-goodness are likely to do. And by and by there comes a time when his new fairy stories sound foolish to him. The cowboy slings his lasso from the top of a cliff and fishes his faithful horse up to him, maybe, and the kid says, 'The man that wrote this book must take me for a sucker.'"

"And then he's through. That kid is inoculated. He'll never catch that disease any more. You needn't worry about him. He's nobody's sucker from that day on."

"And, Golly, Mother, if you knew how a fellow appreciates a decent book when he's had a good long course of trash. There isn't an English prof in the country knows how to appreciate it, as he does."

Reviews

RUMBLING WINGS. By ARTHUR C. PARKER. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1928. \$3.

THE BOOK OF INDIAN CRAFTS AND INDIAN LORE. By JULIAN HARRIS SALOMON. New York: Harper & Bros. 1928. \$3.50.

CO-GE-WE-A. By MOURNING DOVE. Boston: Four Seas. 1928. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MARY AUSTIN

IN "Rumbling Wings," Arthur C. Parker, himself an Indian, supplies precisely the literary quality which is most often missing from the American ensemble, the twinkling touch of wise whimsicality. In this group of retold Iroquois legends reappear the delightful Skunny-Wundy and the Indian village types that have been lost from so many books of Indian tales through the detestable practice, which has too long characterized American use of aboriginal material, of reshaping it to European models. These are authentic Indian tales retold by Indian elders to modern Indian children, losing none of their native flavor by native recognitions of the intrusion of white intelligence into the world of Indian thought. Although "Rumbling Wings" is primarily intended as a book for children's entertainment, I have no hesitancy in recommending it for class work in advanced literary study, for in it are to be found those distinctive American qualities which creep up into our literature from the sod, qualities which we recognize only in their gross exaggerations as Mark Twain has given them to us. In it the Americanisms are subdued to that mysterious titillating approach so loved of children, which makes of the American forest a wonderland as much more appealing to the American child as it is more familiar than the foreign background of European tales.

What is so delightfully communicated in "Rumbling Wings" is none the less competently, but practically, given in Mr. Salomon's "Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore." Prefacing his volume with an excellent culture map of Indian tribes, and copiously illustrating it with photographs and drawings, Mr. Salomon describes and develops the art of Indian craft in a way immensely stimulating to the young craftsman. Although there are many such books on the market, Mr. Salomon has contrived by original choice of articles to be made, and by

the clarity of his directions and the quality of his illustrations, to make his book indispensable to boy and girl activities all over the country. Also he manages to do this without any of the syncopations and confusing of cultures which many previous attempts to popularize Indian crafts for children have been guilty of. Many of the illustrations, salvaged from early travels and out-of-print records not accessible to the general reader, are worth whole chapters of written description. The book also includes the best analysis and practical guide to Indian dance steps which has yet been offered. Probably there is no way of translating the wild beauty and the unique quality of Indian dancing into stage directions, but Mr. Salomon has at least provided a competent approach for young people.

Incidentally, he has provided the approach to an appeal which is about to be made to the Government and the people of the United States, to make use of the Indians themselves in the instruction of young people, in summer camps and outdoor schools, to preserve for our youth the charm and interest of the woods and the plains. Mr. Salomon's book is one of the best arguments yet put forward for making use of Indians as Indians in place of our fumbling attempts to convert them into dull day laborers at unfamiliar and unremunerative tasks, while at the same time we expensively train white teachers to educate our boys and girls in the making of Indian artifacts, and singing and dancing out of books.

In "Co-ge-we-a the Half-blood" we have an interesting venture of the half-Indian toward accomplishing an adjustment of the two races which shall be less bitterly unhappy for the aboriginal. The author, Mourning Dove, is an Okonogan with an American education, who has written a romantic story of the Montana cattle range, profoundly touched with the pathos, humor, and tragedy of the half-breed. There is enough of the open country and the rough life of the West to interest the young reader, and perhaps enough verisimilitude to create a genuine reaction of sympathy in the reader's mind. But one cannot escape the conviction that the real tragedy of the half-breed, or of the white-educated Indian mind, is the one unconsciously revealed in this book. . . . A hybrid book.

Commendable as a *tour de force*, Co-ge-we-a is neither an Indian epic nor an American novel; the story is clouded with the burden of oppression and the plea baffled by the want of any clear conception of the quality of the desired relief. It is, taken as a whole, merely another witness to the failure of white education to "place" the Indian effectively in the "American" scheme of things. Nevertheless, the American young person of to-day should be given a chance to read it. Perhaps it is spiritual hybridization that ails the younger generation of our own people.

MIDNIGHT TREASURE. By WILLIAM ROLLINS, JR. New York: Coward-McCann. 1929. \$2.

Reviewed by T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

WITH the publication of this book a new entertainment for the maturer boy begins, for Mr. Rollins, who went to war at eighteen and served with the French Army for the duration of the conflict, comes with gifts of a remarkable variety. The present story is treasure fourfold. First it is a mystery tale excellent in its ability to surprise. Here also is adventure peaked up into situations so tense that Jim Hawkins's best moments are remembered as rather pastoral beside them. Thirdly, the book carries a dozen or more characters, Jack Gaylor's friends and enemies, who live with very real friendliness or ferocity, and balance each other most agreeably. Pop Olsen, for example, whose body you touch still warm in death; and the villain squad, with Mick easily the Jesse James of the lot; and Mrs. Murdock who dressed "all in black on account of losing her husband in the Spanish War, he falling off the train, dead drunk, on the way there," and Mr. George, whom among all those wicked ones, you thank God for; and Pete—who but the serious humorist that Mr. Rollins is would make the action hinge on an Indian from Philadelphia? This brings us to the fourth endowment of this rich juvenile, its humor.

Jack Gaylor tells his own story, Jack being the "town bum" of New Paris, Colorado. The plot, surprisingly, deals with the old machinery of treasure, a torn map, a cave, and the ultimate chest of turquoises. This would be disappointing were it not for Jack. His hard-boiled insights delivered in slang or descriptions of unconscious poetry, give the narrative its humorous warmth and make the action irresistible. Gaylor has a tough hide but a tolerant heart. His eyes

see everything, his tongue gives it a rare twist, and the chapters dealing with the commonplace are real achievement. So justly is life transcribed that one accepts the profanity, although some parents will shake heads.

Certainly here is an author to look forward to for further treasure. Jack Gaylor must reappear, preferably in the more ordinary circumstances which elicit his shrewdest humor and make him worthy of serious discussion.

JOHNNY APPLESEED AND OTHER POEMS. By VACHEL LINDSAY. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1928. \$1.75.

Reviewed by JOSEPHINE PINCKNEY

THE publishers of this book list their selection of Vachel Lindsay's poems among their classics for children from ten to twelve, but it is really suitable for children of all ages. In fact, many of the poems are labelled for the very, very young, though these are not the ones that will give the book its wide appeal. These poems written for children fail somehow to charm one adult, which is a criterion to the extent that she has often noticed that the books children dog-ear usually say something to the child surviving in the grown-up. But the poems in this book that were written, presumably, for adults are perfect for children, even the infantile.

To be sure, youngsters will miss the thread and implication of "The Congo" and "The Chinese Nightingale," but this is no more important than that a child reading "Alice's Adventures" misses the satire. The adventures satisfy time. When Lindsay addresses himself to mature minds he writes of the things children love—Indians, dragons, witch-doctors, circuses—because they generally please him and then he is richly successful.

His presentation of his subjects, whether fabulous or comical, is intensely real; he gives the child pictures in three dimensions. His poems are full of the rush of buffalos stampeding, motors burning up the highway, cakewalks, riding about on dragons; they are bright with the sound and color of green festoons and red balloons, yellow grass, and orange trees that grow in sand as white as glass, ebony palaces inlaid with gold and ivory and elephant-bone. He excels in noise, in boom-boom-boom, and words that sizzle, with delicate tunes strung between. He has the courage to write of motor-horns in the grand manner and to call the vulgar the human.

Lindsay's claim to be a preacher of the gospel of beauty may be open to dispute among those who feel that preaching blackens the petal-edges of so delicate a flower, but his broad conception of beauty will be good training for the infant esthete. The book is profusely illustrated, though illustrations seem superfluous for poems that are pictures in their own right.

CRUSADERS' GOLD. By ANNE D. KYLE. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1928. \$2.

THIS book follows the tradition of the dearly loved *St. Nicholas* girls' serial story, but Miss Kyle has not escaped the tendency of writers for girls either to lapse into sentimentality or else to bend over backwards and launch upon impossibly melodramatic adventures. In spite of vivid incidents and authentic local color the book lacks continuity.

The story concerns the daughter of an American archaeologist in Palestine. Her rather prosaic experiences as a newcomer are finally linked up through her father's research, with an "Arabian Nights" hunt for lost treasure. The two elements are, however, incompletely fused. Daphne's contacts with two nice Scotch missionary children and an English boy are not made significant in the general action until so late that a sudden crowding in of confessions and discoveries is necessary to catch up with the plot. Such a figure as Mr. Manning puts the dignified pursuit of archaeology in a slightly lurid light which might be misleading to children. He smacks too much of the made-to-order villain and makes one suspect Miss Kyle of careless thinking as well as careless writing. One wishes that she had either studied her plot more thoroughly or else given more historical background and foreign atmosphere with which she is evidently familiar.

For the book is not without interesting possibilities. Miss Kyle knows Palestine and manages to make her setting and some of the individual incidents both vivid and convincing. She has made interesting use of the figure of Colonel Lawrence and her bandits and fakers of antiques are evidently drawn from life. Her failure lies in welding her material into a plausible whole.

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Leaders in the Spring book parade

The Aftermath [1918-1928] by Winston S. Churchill

The author of "The World Crisis" here writes "the most careful analysis of the world's difficulties which any writer has produced since the Versailles gathering."—*Saturday Review of Literature*. \$5.00

The Re-discovery of America by Waldo Frank

"Typically American, as typical as the radio and the motor-car. . . . I read this book with delight and growing indignation."
—HARRY HANSEN in the *New York World*. \$3.00

Field-Marshal Earl Haig by Brig.-Gen. John Charteris

A close companion of the British leader, both before and during the World War, writes a biography that reveals many new incidents and portrays a great military figure. (Published April 18.)
Illustrated. \$6.00

Unravelling the Book of Books by Ernest R. Trattner

The amazing story of the investigation of the Old and New Testament by scientific thinkers of the last two centuries, and of their persecution. *The Religious Book Club Selection for April*. \$2.75

Three Reformers by Jacques Maritain

Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau are the subjects of this brilliant book by one of the most distinguished of living philosophers. \$2.50

The Hero in Thy Soul by Arthur John Gossip

author of "From the Edge of the Crowd," etc. \$2.50

How to Appreciate Prints by Frank Weitenkampf

"Likely to remain for some time to come the most popular book on the subject."—*Boston Transcript*.
With 47 illustrations. \$3.00

In Java by John C. Van Dyke

"Any lover of the picturesque and strange will enjoy it."
—*The Outlook*. \$2.50

Sand by Will James

author of "Smoky"

With 43 illustrations by the author

The story of a man and a horse; of a wastrel from the city lost on the big ranges and his fight back to manhood; and of a superb black stallion that no man could catch.

"I guess this story goes as fiction," writes Will James, "but to me it's pretty true for I knowed such a feller as I'm writing about here. . . . He was the first grown feller what knowed of easy ways of living who came to the cow country and stuck, the first one I ever seen, and the kind of a man you'd least expect to, for there was nothing to him to stick with, nothing but a rack of bones and a fluttering heart." \$2.50



Round Up the stories of Ring W. Lardner

Of this book Carl Van Doren writes: "A characteristically, completely, unmistakably American book, truly a native product of a native art. Up to the present Mr. Lardner has had two rather distinct audiences: a large popular audience which has read him chiefly for his comedy, and a small, sophisticated one which has read him for his insight. It is time for these two audiences to meet on common ground."

Thirty-five stories, sixteen of them never before published in any book. 467 pages. *The Literary Guild Selection for April*. \$2.50



Coming early in May— ILLUSION a brilliant novel of modern life and society, by ARTHUR TRAIN

They Still Fall in Love by Jesse Lynch Williams

"It is delightful; for its profound insight is . . . seasoned with joyous satire and the satire is . . . serenely mellowed by kindly humor."
—STEWART EDWARD WHITE. \$2.50

The Bishop Murder Case by S. S. Van Dine

"By far the best of the Philo Vance series and probably the best detective story ever written in this country."—*Detroit News*. \$2.00

A Native Argosy by Morley Callaghan

Fourteen stories and two short novels by the author of "Strange Fugitive." "Frank, economical, cynically humorous, and psychologically sound."—*New York Evening Post*. \$2.50

The Road by André Chamson

The story of a French peasant couple transplanted from their mountain farm to a factory town. "A French 'Growth of the Soil.' . . . A novel of perpetual delight."—*New York Times*. \$2.00

Pale Warriors by David Hamilton

A lively novel of a lovely lady without scruples. "She goes from one mad episode to another, driving men to the point of frenzy. . . . The result is an altogether diverting story."—*New York Times*. \$2.50

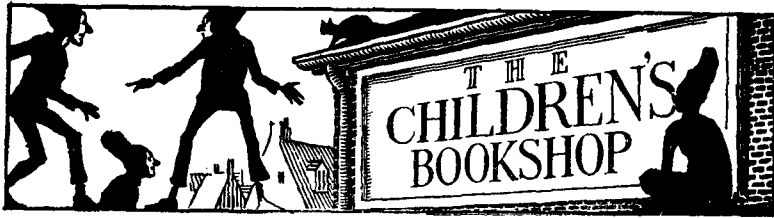
Young Blood by Francis Lynde

The author of "Blind Man's Buff" and other swift-moving romances here weaves big business ethics, the lure of railroading, and a pleasing love story into an absorbing tale. \$2.00

at all bookstores

Charles Scribner's Sons

New York



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The Gossip Shop

By RACHEL FIELD

IT is really rather ridiculous to begin by saying that Spring is here, since anyone with any sense at all knows it already by the cherry trees, balloons, and crowded benches in the park, and by the number of flower-cart men, hurdy-gurdys, traveling merry-go-rounds, and old women with baby carriages full of pretzels one meets in other, less select, parts of town. Then, too, the circus is back, and we have been to it. Yes, we have seen Colleano, the greatest master of tight-rope dancing, and the four Wallendahs in the "most hazardous and sensational high-wire feature ever seen on earth." Of course, we could not look at them through the death-defying part. We never can. We much preferred to see Gunga, the East Indian elephant, carry Yasso, his keeper, in his mouth by the head. Gunga was so gentle and considerate we almost shouldn't have minded such a ride ourselves. Then there were "the world's most remarkable educated sea-lions," to whom we gave ourselves wholeheartedly. The youngest of these was evidently making his debut to the ring, and it almost was more than he could bear to stay put on his box while the others performed. It took his trainer, three keepers, and we would hardly like to say how many raw fish, to get him to go into the cage again.

Speaking of circuses, it seems strange that while some book about them for children is published nearly every year, none has ever managed to be quite all it ought to be. Of course, there was "Toby Tyler." That was a rattling good tale (we can still remember quite vividly the part where the monkey died), and there are some others as well, but nothing one could exactly call a classic.

Perhaps there will be one to take the prize which Horace Liveright, originator and founder with Albert Boni of the Modern Library, is offering for the best manuscript to start off his latest series, the Modern Library for Boys and Girls. This prize will be \$2,500, and all entries must be submitted by December 1st, 1929. The aim of this new enterprise is to publish modern books for young people, worthy of a place alongside standard juvenile classics. Those chosen will be passed upon by an advisory board of such distinguished critics and educators as Mary Austin, May Lamberton Becker, Dr. Will Durant, and others. Mary Frank, until recently superintendent of the Extension Division of the New York Public Library, will head this latest addition to the ever increasing list of established Juvenile Departments.

Another change in this particular line is Katherine Ulrich's move from the offices of Coward-McCann, where she has been in charge of the children's books for the past year, to head the new Junior Literary Guild. The town seems to be fairly teeming with young people's book-of-the-month clubs. We keep hearing of them on every side. But this one must not be confused with the Junior Book Club, sponsored by the Junior League, which we believe we are right in saying was the first to put such a plan into practice. Miss Ernestine Evans, who has been associated with Coward-McCann since that firm began operations and who before that was personally responsible for some of the most interesting children's book week numbers of the *New Republic*, will conduct the department as well as continuing her other editorial activities with the company.

A post card has just come from Louise H. Seaman, who is about to return from a wedding trip in Spain. The card is post-marked Gibraltar, but she assures us that she will be back at the Macmillan Company offices in time to see that nothing disastrous happens to the dummy of our favorite future juvenile. The title? That's telling.

Two especially pleasant things came our way last month. For one, Wilbur Macy Stone invited us to have dinner at East Orange and see all his newest treasures in the way of early juvenilia. Those who have been reading Mr. Stone's articles on old children's books lately appearing in these columns may have some idea of what such an evening can mean. Only by summoning great will power can one remember when the time comes to take the last train

home. From this visit we bore back in triumph a sand-toy, one of those mechanical devices for which we have long languished. This is not an antique, though there are several such in Mr. Stone's toy collection, but the little cardboard acrobat goes through his motions according to the same formula. You shake the box and sand mysteriously flows over a little unseen wheel, rather on the principle of an hour glass. Well, we are not mechanically minded and cannot explain very well, but for ourselves at least we much prefer him to live, and rather less dependable, acrobats.

The other good thing we started to write about is Laura Benét's new book of verse, "Noah's Dove," exquisite inside and out, with its hepatica-blue covers and silver-gray backing. Just the colors for "Noah's Dove" to wear, and the poem itself is a joy. We should hate to say how many times we have read it. Here, too, are more of Miss Benét's rare and irresistible animal portraits, "Tadpoles," "Cushy Cow," "Little Fishes in Glass Dishes," and many more in different vein. Her verse is always fine-spun, as clear-cut and varied of pattern as the frost tracings on a window pane in winter. While the poems are not, taken as a whole, suitable for the very young, still there are some that should be in every child's anthology, along with De la Mare, Emily Dickinson's nature poems, Christina Rossetti, and others. We almost forgot to say that "Noah's Dove" has been brought out by Doubleday, Doran in a limited edition at five dollars.

Reviews

PILGRIMS, INDIANS, AND PATRIOTS. By RANDOLPH G. ADAMS. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. An Atlantic Monthly Publication. 1928. \$3.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

IT is no inconsiderable praise for this volume to say that both the letter-press and illustrations are more interesting than in its predecessor, "The Gateway to American History." The pictures are of course the reason for the book's existence. They begin with John Smith's map of New England and an old sketch of the sperm whale from the *London Magazine*; they end with a contemporaneous drawing of the surrender at Yorktown. All the treasures of the William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor, of which Mr. Adams is librarian, have been ransacked for illustrations bearing upon colonization, the wars of the French and English, and the Revolution. While a few of these are familiar, like Hogarth's picture of a debtor's prison, and several have little or no historical value, like Chappel's hackneyed and imaginative "Valley Forge," the majority are fresh enough to be of value to the specialist as well as to the general reader.

Here we may study the pictures from *Hennepin's Journal* (1704), including the earliest drawing of Niagara Falls, and the sketch of the building of the first sailing vessel on Lake Erie; some curious and enlightening pictures from the *Universal Magazine* upon colonial industry—a cotton plantation, a sugar mill, a clothweaving establishment; the cross-section of a seventeenth-century ship from Coronelli's "Atlas" (1696); the pictures of a frontier block-house and a colonial sawmill from *Amberley's Journal*, and rare contemporary drawings of Lexington and Bunker Hill. One is at a loss to decide whether the most amusing picture is "New England Fathers Singing Psalms," from the "New England Psalm-Singer" of 1770, or the incomparable bit of nature-faking in Moll's wood-cut of beavers at work on the Niagara River, from his "Map of North America in 1715." Since there are no calendared plates in the volume, the reproduction is often distinctly crude, but the loss on this account is less than might be supposed.

Mr. Randolph's text is addressed to juvenile readers. As it should be, it is simple, clear, and easy in style, with emphasis on the drama and color in our national record. This volume and the "Gateway" should admirably serve their purpose of interesting many youngsters of grammar-school age in American history. The author treats of the founding of New England and Pennsylvania (but not Virginia); of the explorations by the French; of the fur trade, the whale and cod fisheries, and the

plantation system; of pirates, buccaneers, and smugglers; of log cabins and frontier warfare; of the navigation system, the Stamp Act, and the tea-parties, and of the military operations of the Revolution. As history it is not well proportioned, for the text has to follow the illustrations, but it never fails to be interesting. For the benefit of older readers, Mr. Adams would have done well to include a bibliography and a short critical note of appendix on his pictures.

PIONEERS OF FREEDOM. By MCALISTER COLEMAN. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1929. \$2.

Reviewed by ROYAL J. DAVIS

THIS book runs counter to the current fashion in biography. Instead of tending to belittle the personages whom it presents, or at least to play up their defects, it frankly depicts them as heroes. It was written, says Norman Thomas in his Introduction, "to meet a definite need—the need for new heroes for the young people of America." What Mr. Thomas means, however, is a need, not simply for new heroes, but for a new kind of hero. He discloses the real purpose of the volume when he states that its author was asked by the Pioneer Youth Literature Committee "to prepare a number of short biographies of men and women who have fought for the freedom of the workers of this country after their own manner."

Mr. Coleman has interpreted his commission rather freely, for his "men and women" are nine men and one woman, Frances Wright. Among the men, moreover, is Thomas Jefferson, who can hardly be characterized as a "new hero" and whose inclusion is doubly strange in view of Mr. Thomas's caustic remark, "Our children know all about the politicians, business men, and warriors who stride through the pages of every school text-book." If there is a politician who strides through the pages of every school text-book more conspicuously than the author of the Declaration of Independence, it would be interesting to know his name.

Just as novels "with a purpose" are apt to suffer in their artistry from the intrusion of an extraneous element, so biographies "with a purpose" are almost certain to present a somewhat one-sided view of their subjects. Mr. Coleman's series of portraits may be valuable as a corrective of hostile representations, but at least half of them need a similar corrective themselves. The fairest sketches are those of Thomas Paine and Charles Steinmetz. The one of John Mitchell would deserve to be included in this category if it did not wander from biography into an account of the general struggle between the coal operators and the miners, with the result that one of the most dramatic and inspiring figures in our industrial history is submerged.

Mr. Coleman has the gift of graphic delineation, and he uses it with particular effectiveness when he begins a sketch with a scene in the life of his hero. His biographies of Wendell Phillips and Eugene V. Debs are especially interesting—whatever may be thought of their impartiality—because he carries this method steadily through them. In addition to the persons mentioned, Mr. Coleman treats of John P. Altgeld, Henry George, and Samuel Gompers.

HOW YOU BEGAN: A Child's Introduction to Biology. By AMABEL WILLIAMS-ELLIS. New York: Coward-McCann. 1929. \$1.50.

Reviewed by BEATRICE GESELL

THIS small primer containing some ninety-five pages written in a direct, lucid, and interesting style, is an admirable summary of the development of the human body. The child who reads it will find many of his questions in regard to birth and life answered intelligently and with a due regard for truth. He will be introduced to individual differences, and to the complexities of evolution in terms which he can understand. He will feel the inescapable necessity for growth and change inherent in all life, and realize at the same time that evolution is a process which may also include living backwards and so result in arrest and destruction.

The book contains significant departures from the usual treatment of evolution which add strength and scientific value to it. The obvious similarities in the embryonic development of animal and man are clearly stated, but are ingeniously accompanied by a discriminating regard for the more profound differences which have a genetic reference to man's superiority and promise. The survival of the fittest, so often merely a treatise on brute strength, is tempered by a recognition of the contribution of the weak who

overcome their initial handicap. The long period of helplessness in the human infant which necessitates protection within the body of the mother is related to the evolution of mind and to changes in behavior values rather than to the satisfactions of mutual intimacy. Such a clear-cut story of the development of the human body might have included a more significant reference to sex. The setting for such a discussion is peculiarly appropriate. Perhaps we may look forward to this in a sequel.

The story of the differentiation of body cells and the division of labor among them, resulting in specialization and increase of power, is concretely put, but without sufficient emphasis upon the interdependence of mind and body. There is a dichotomy in the treatment of "thinking and doing" which results perhaps from the complexity of the subject rather than from any intent on the part of the author. The discussion of death is starkly pragmatic and scarcely defensible, but the book contains valuable information treated in a highly original manner.

The illustrations by Thoron MacVeagh are decorative and enliven the text.

Why not replace some of the aimless, reiterative, early readers with a book with substance like this one?

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Compiled by EMILY RUSSELL McDEVITT

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