

## Books of Special Interest

### Scientific Education

THE CHILD AND THE WORLD. By MARGARET NAUMBURG. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1929. \$3.50.

Reviewed by LUCY SPRAGUE MITCHELL  
Bureau of Educational Experiments

MARGARET NAUMBURG, as the founder of the Walden School (originally called the Children's School), has for years been one of the outstanding figures in the United States in experimental, or as she prefers to have it called, in "scientific education." No book from such a source can fail to attract attention. "The Child and the World" will do more. For it is in the best sense of the word a "provocative" book. The title is no misnomer unless, indeed, "Margaret Naumburg and the World" might be more accurate. For although the book is cast in the form of dialogues between various members of the school staff and the public represented by different types of school visitors, it is essentially a personal book reflecting the thinking and the experiences of its writer. The discussions in the first dialogues and in the last give fairly concrete pictures of Miss Naumburg's philosophy as embodied in her actual school procedures: in the other dialogues they

serve largely as a background of problems of which the school is aware because it is dealing with human material. The children themselves seldom appear—a glimpse of the "pre-school children" as seen by the Mid-western superintendent, a discussion of parents and schools by a group of High School students, which does not sound like, and I hope is not, a recorded conversation, a play, and a record of a discussion during its creation.

It is the book of a student filled with quotations not only from recognized educators, but from anyone who can throw light on human beings and their behavior. Miss Naumburg is consistently trying to understand children first and to plan a course of study for them second. This is what she means by a "scientific," or "experimental," point of view in education as opposed to the merely "progressive" (represented in the Lincoln School, Horace Mann, and others) where the old curriculum is not necessarily questioned and the progressiveness consists merely in an attempt to better the methods of teaching old things.

Miss Naumburg's conception of a school is a synthesis of modern scientific thinking. Appropriately the dialogue form permits of wide and easy ranging from the psychoanalytic libido theory to Osborn's theory of

the deterioration of modern men, from the meaning of "social" and "individual" to the persistence of certain physiological cells, from Alexander's technique of muscle coordination to the place of tool subjects or drama in the curriculum, from intelligence tests to Whitehead's "Organization of Thought." In the course of these animadversions on life and growth, Miss Naumburg hits an extraordinary number of nails on the head. Her summaries of the attitude towards education on the part of settlements, labor organizations, and public school authorities, her evaluation of psychological tests, of college board examinations, of Dewey's own school and progressive schools in general, these and many others are both pithy and profound, and constitute a real critique of current thinking on education.

The dialogue form turns out to be a subtle method of proving this school's superiority over everyone who comes the school's way. Now of course Miss Naumburg thinks she is right—what is a conviction but thinking you are right? But that is different from thinking that a few minutes conversation and glimpse into a classroom will prove you are right to a school superintendent from a mid-western Public School, to "the" sociologist, to "the" artist, to Normal School students, parents (even to a conservative father), to public school teachers, old-fashioned physician, university professor, and a modern stage pro-

ducer. Anyone who has worked in an experimental school knows that the job of convincing the world is no such easy one!

What is the main educational thesis which makes these easy converts and through what technique is this thesis put into school practice? The book answers the first question much more fully than the second. "I started the school," Miss Naumburg says, "with the purpose of applying the principles of analytic psychology to the education of normal children. I welcomed psychoanalysis as an educational technique." The psychoanalytic trend of Miss Naumburg's thinking is indicated in nearly every subject she approaches quite apart from the direct discussions of Jung, Freud, Adler, and others, and from the explanation of her own "middle ground" platform. The unconscious, she holds, plays the leading rôle in a child's life. The effort to understand this unconscious, therefore becomes the school's chief job. How the school is to arrive at this understanding is referred to incidentally and is implicit in the whole pedagogic argument. We are told that records and special case studies have been made over many years of both individual children and groups through the application of the analytic technique. Judgment on such analytic records must wait until their promised publication, which we hope will not be long deferred. Further, we are told that many analysts now cooperate closely with the school. Above all we are told that "at least half the teachers" and many of the parents have been analyzed, "while the rest of the teachers are equally interested in the application of analytic principles to our general educational scheme."

Of all fields in the world I should suppose the trained expert is a necessity in analysis and conversely the amateur is a menace. To attempt to interpret the hidden life of a child through personal and emotional revelations of one's own seems insecure and consequently unscientific procedure. Even if one were to accept the psycho-analytic viewpoint as Miss Naumburg expounds it—and I am intentionally side-stepping that issue in this review—I think one would hesitate to trust so delicate and powerful a technique to class-room teachers merely because they had been analyzed. Particularly as the technique is not successful unless the patients—in this case the children—coöperate. So that the teacher must be more than an observer; she must involve the children in active investigation into their own states of mind. It would seem to me almost an impossibility to keep a false element of excitement off a stage so set as well as to place the emphasis inappropriately for children. Miss Naumburg pleads for "education through experience" instead of the old "education by means of the printed word." But does she mean by experience this searching by the children for the hidden motives of their behavior?

That is not what some of us mean by a "curriculum of experience," and I presume it is not all of what Miss Naumburg means. But certainly it is the part she has chosen to stress in her book. And on this point I do not join the converts of her dialogue.

In spite of this fundamental disagreement, I found myself more than repaid for an arduous reading of Miss Naumburg's book. The problems she raises are those which every school and every family should face. And I rejoice that she has given the world her answer to them both in book form and in a school.

### Alfred Huty, Etcher

AMERICAN ETCHERS. Volume II: ALFRED HUTY. Twelve Facsimiles. New York: T. Spencer Hutson. 1929.

THAT young artist is fortunate indeed whose early work is recorded in such accurate and sympathetic fashion. Such a book as this a generation ago would have been reserved for an artist famous and safely dead. Its appearance may be taken to indicate a greater concern for the artist still in the insecurity of this mortal life and an increasing popularity of the art of etching. Duncan Philipps provides the ritual introduction in which he justly celebrates Alfred Huty's tenacity as a portraitist of trees and his ready geniality as a sketcher of people in groups. We have no quarrel with the estimate, yet in scanning the plates we feel, despite the prizes so many have won so quickly, a talent still immature—charming quality of touch rather than serious merit of invention. In short, without at all grudging him the honor, we suspect that the artist is prematurely *rélié en vau*. The book is perfection as to make, and besides the regular edition there is a limited edition of seventy with an original etching.

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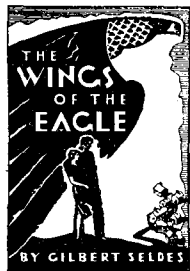
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## Books of Special Interest

### Marriage and Its Basis

MARRIAGE. By EDWARD WESTERMARCK. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1929. \$1.50.

Reviewed by V. F. CALVERTON

IN these days when books on marriage and morals seem to have multiplied beyond all reason, with many adding little to those that preceded, the appearance of this book of Edward Westermarck, which considers marriage in terms of its historical background, has unusual significance. Westermarck's book does what most books on marriage fail to do. It sets marriage in its historical position, considers its forms in various eras, its individual and social aspects, and its cultural characteristics. It is descriptive rather than dispositive in method. In simple, expeditious way it provides the reader with many of the general conclusions that its author drew, after more elaborate analysis, in his noted work on "The History of Human Marriage."

One can find here, in rapid review, many of Dr. Westermarck's various conclusions as to the basis of marriage, the nature of the incest taboo, the origin of endogamy and exogamy, and the numerous theories concerning group-marriage and promiscuity among primitive peoples. The presentment is always clear but not always sufficient. The very absence of the abundant materials that made his "History of Human Marriage" such an invaluable document, tends to make this volume lag a little in interest and fall short somewhat in conviction. By way of quick contrast, for example, his book on "Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco" was striking in just those ways that this book is not. You got in the former not only a picture of marriage customs, but also the presence of the human factor, the actual "feel" of the situation, the real "spirit" of the *mores*. That you do not get in this volume. Here you have facts, but without the spirit that is or was behind them. As a result, this volume, in considerable part, reads more like a sterile monograph than a dynamic interpretation.

Nevertheless, for the general reader the book will provide an acquaintanceship with marital forms that most books on marriage leave out of account altogether or mention in a passing footnote or paragraph. The fact that marriage grows out of the family, and not the family out of marriage; that as an institution marriage is more economic than sexual in origin; that it evinces all varieties of duration through the ages—these basic facts alone will clarify the attitude of the general reader toward the whole problem of marriage and morals. In achieving such clarification the book serves a good purpose. Instead of viewing the present bankruptcy of marriage which has spread over the western world as something unprecedented, for instance, the reader can see in it a form of change that has occurred before in history, and which is to be expected in the career of any *mores*. Moralities have their curves of ascent and descent like the history of rivers. This fact is brought out in adequate detail in the discussion of the many forms of marriage that man has hitherto adopted, then rejected, and sometimes re-adopted again.

As to the specific contentions of the book—in the first place it is interesting to note that Dr. Westermarck does not here make the eager defense of pre-nuptial chastity that he did in his "History of Human Marriage." The error in his earlier position had met with severe attack by many anthropologists, in particular Robert Briffault. One of the most recent instances in disproof of Westermarck's earlier conception is to be found in Malinowski's "Sexual Life of Savages," where we find that in Melanesia pre-nuptial chastity is practically unknown. That Westermarck still refuses to recognize the matrilineal background of early primitive marriage, even when faced with all the enormous evidence of Briffault, is all the more unfortunate for his general interpretation of marriage in these mad, modern years, when, as many have augured, we are on the road to another matriarchate. The same error creeps into this book which is to be found in his earlier ones, namely, that connected with the differentiations of marriage as a concept and a practice. It is not that Westermarck, himself is not aware of the differentiations, but that the reader will most likely be misled by the failure to emphasize them. Marriage in many primitive communities resembles so little marriage as we, with our modern categories of consciousness, conceive it, that it is practically a misnomer to use the same word to de-

scribe both conditions. Among the aboriginal tribes of Malaya, for example, individuals often *marry* forty or fifty times; the Cherokee Iroquois "commonly changed wives three or four times a year, among the Hurons "women (were) purchased by the night, week, month or winter." Now while in a certain loose sense you may describe all these relationships as marital, there is a great danger of misapprehension in this type of nomenclature. It would be a highly intelligent procedure if we coined a new word for our anthropological vocabulary so that this kind of confusion could not occur. Especially is this confusion pronounced, when we discuss such a relationship as monogamy, and here Westermarck is even evasive himself.

Despite these criticisms, the general reader will find in this book a fund of data concerning the basis and background of marriage, which will make him all the better equipped to understand marriage in its present forms, and to "see through" many of the pretensions and spurious arguments that are proffered to us about marriage today.

### Black Ulysses

WINGS ON MY FEET. By HOWARD W. ODUM. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by R. EMMET KENNEDY

AS an authentic, emotional record of the attitude of mind of the American negro soldier during the late war, "Wings on My Feet" contains much that is interesting and diverting. Preoccupied with his uncertain fate, Black Ulysses contemplates death and destruction and the terrors of war surrounding him, voicing his sentiments and speaking his mind without fear or reservation. At times there is an undercurrent of reckless humor so unexpected it is almost grotesque.

Written in monologue form, the hero gives his impressions with a natural egotism and child-like bravado quite true to life; except in a few instances where certain ideas are advanced so at variance with the immaturity of his mind, it seems that he is being used as a medium to give expression to the author's own philosophies of life. One misses, however, the pleasing originality, the variety of incident, and the frequent change of tempo, all of which gave such character to Dr. Odum's former book, "Rainbow Round My Shoulder." Black Ulysses, the troubadour, was spontaneous and amusing, chiefly concerned with his private amours and the sheer delight of roaming abroad in the happy-go-lucky world. Black Ulysses, the soldier, conscious of his uniform and brass buttons, has become self-important. Affected by the nearness of an audience hitherto ignored, he seems inclined to show off; often more deeply concerned about the impression he is making than he is about the general tone of his rambling discourse.

Prevailing monotony, more than anything else, unfortunately mars the appeal of the story. Before long the reader finds himself losing interest and growing impatient. It is like listening to a long, well-written piece of piano music, where there is never a change of key: or like hearing a performance of an unending oratorio where certain unimportant, meaningless words are sung again and again, their only mission being to fill the listener with righteous annoyance. This defect might easily have been overcome if Dr. Odum had shown a more generous sense of elimination in selecting his material. Likewise the monotony would appear less insistent if he had supplied the original music that goes with the song fragments breaking into the theme from time to time, that is, if such music is extant. For, after considering the strange verse mixture, where familiar lines of old spirituals join with the words of a well-known folk-song, with the occasional ringing-in of a line from a bawdy street ballad intended to give novel flavor, there is reason for suspecting someone guilty of a flagrant disregard of artistic verity, and the reader is left trying to decide whether the fault is due to the over-ingeniousness of the author or to the reckless fancy of his singing soldier.

However important the merits of "Wings On My Feet" as an authentic document echoing the war and revealing the vital sensations of an actual flesh and blood personality, as straight fiction the book lacks certain enduring qualities and the inventive force that would serve to rank it as an important literary achievement.

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