

❖ BOOKS ON REVOLUTIONARY LANDS ❖

An Epic Struggle

MAHATMA GANDHI AT WORK. Edited by C. F. ANDREWS. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1931. \$3.

Reviewed by KENNETH SAUNDERS

"PEACE was never to be my portion in this life," writes Mr. Gandhi in his great autobiography, "My Experiments with Truth." It might also be the motto of his friend and editor, C. F. Andrews. Wherever the battle of race rages hottest, there is Andrews, who for the last thirty or more years has been one of the little company which has served the cause of humanity on this greatest of its battle fronts. The present volume comes out very appropriately at this moment, when Britain is being challenged to prove that though she has lost much she has not lost her soul, and that she will carry out to the letter her promises to the great sister nation of India.

Many Englishmen have long recognized the real significance of both Gandhi and Andrews; for these men stand for a solution of the problems of India on the high spiritual plane, and they bring expert knowledge to the help of their idealism. And so while Viceroy, from Lord Hardinge to Lord Irwin—"that noble Englishman," as Gandhi called him in his first speech in England the other night—have befriended these men, the lesser fry have been as vicious as mosquitoes. And in this volume, which tells of the epic struggle in South Africa, Mr. Gandhi does not hesitate to call a spade a spade and to blame the "weakness" of a Chamberlain, and the "duplicité" of a Selborne. Fortunately the time is past when Indians need be mealy-mouthed or polite, and we can welcome the bluntness of this great son of fact.

What is the issue raised in this volume and its predecessor? It is a clean-cut one, that of the right of the Indian people to their place in the British Commonwealth—"the right to sin," in Mr. Gandhi's striking phrase, the right to make their own mistakes like the rest of us. As he said the other night, "Yes, we are patriots and nationalists, but we are also good internationalists, for the interests of all are bound up together."

But there is another issue interwoven with this between the two nations—one even more far-reaching. This is the race question. Can East and West solve their common problems together? Can they learn to respect one another and to co-operate in the spirit of partnership? To this problem it is that Gandhi makes his greatest contribution. His training has been providential, and he claims that in his search for truth he has been led step by step by Providence. This claim no one who has read the two former volumes edited by Mr. Andrews, "Gandhi's Ideals" and "Gandhi's Own Story," will care to dispute. This third volume is the key to the other two, for it tells very vividly how on the narrow stage of South Africa this great servant of humanity worked out his cardinal principles, and won a great and notable victory of the spirit. Without bitterness, but with the great art of sincerity, he tells of his intolerable treatment and of the long struggle for the rights of the indentured laborers from India. He shows himself a shrewd observer of the mixed peoples of South Africa and of their qualities, and he learns from all alike, whether it is from great ones like Olive Schreiner or the humble coolie women and Julius and Boer farmers, and the tale of his friendships with Englishmen of all classes is a cheering one to read at this time.

The great fascination of this volume is the evolution of his principles, which have been described as the great tripod on which the whole structure rests. Not all will agree with his interpretation of *Brahmacharya*, purity with its rather extreme note of asceticism, but the second great principle of *Satyagraha*, or the Power of Truth, is immutable, and we may rejoice that in our time soul force has won so many victories. Mr. Gandhi distinguishes it from passive resistance.

He defines it as "the Force which is born of Truth and Love," and he claims that the early Christians were not passive resisters but *Satyagrahis*. The third principle is that of *Ahimsa*, or refusal to do harm, and it is this which has again and again disarmed opposition and made friends for Gandhi and his work. He is full of the spirit of loving kindness, and non-violence is a very poor and negative term to express the love which radiates from him. As champion of the poor



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and the oppressed, he is also a friend of the rich and the mighty, and passes easily from the presence of villagers to that of Viceroy, or from his friends in the East end of London to the Indian delegates who live amid the splendors of the Dorchester Hotel.

These words on the Gita, which "competes on equal terms with the Sermon on the Mount for my allegiance," are in many ways a key to the understanding of Mr. Gandhi:

"Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear—fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offense, and so on. One who overcomes the fear of death does not surmount all other fears, as is commonly but erroneously supposed. . . . We thus find that all fear is the baseless fabric of our own vision. Fear has no place in our hearts when we have shaken off the attachment for wealth, for family, and for the body. Wealth, the family, and the body will be there, just the same; we have only to change our attitude to them. All these are not ours but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. Why, then should we entertain any fears?"

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The Passionate Pilgrim

I WENT TO RUSSIA. By LIAM O'FLAHERTY. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES FUCHS

A NY list of living Irish prose writers of the first consideration, no matter how circumspectly drawn up, would have to meet challenges, both as regards entries and omissions—but no compiler would leave out the name of Liam O'Flaherty, nor would the most capacious scrutiny challenge the inclusion. O'Flaherty is a classical embodiment of revolutionary Dublin. His mind is like a storm-tossed sea, throwing up the fauna and flora of the Irish coast—and a good deal of historical wreckage as well. There is a curious element of reasonableness and calm self-possession in the make-up of this passionate young man. He thinks, like a common Gael, with his nerves—but like a very uncommon one, he has the artist's knack of weighing, censoring, and properly interrelating his impressions, after the first stress of emotional perception is over. This precious gift of turning passionate perceptions into calm ones, and yet leav-

ing them with an aura of their first ardor, was plainly visible in his first published work—a little gem of a story, called "The Informer"—and it abides with him in his latest: the record of a Russian journey.

The book lacks a motto—a very good one might be taken from "Kim," or else, from Kipling's rhymed editorials. [I have to quote "Kim" from memory—the book, once lent, no matter to whom, is sure not to return.] "Kim, being Irish, loved to see the immediate effect of action." Ditto, O'Flaherty. And as to Kipling's East and West—why, the twain have met at last—an impenetrable Irish body of highly emotional experimental-mindedness has collided with an irresistible one of social reconstruction. Result: the delightful volume now before us.

O'Flaherty is only thirty-four years old, but like Homer's *anthropos polytropos*, he is a much-travelled Odysseus. He fought in the World War, on French soil, as a private of the Irish guards, was shell-shocked, and returned to Ireland. There he was surrounded by Dublin revolutionists—it is to be assumed that they wouldn't have noticed the difference between a sane man and a shell-shocked one, anyway. Recovered, he went to London, to Smyrna, to Montreal, Boston, New York—and wherever he went, he carried, like Jacob Marley in the "Christmas Carol," his own atmosphere with him. The Roman poet had predivined the O'Flaherty when he wrote:

*Caelum, non animus, mutant qui
transmare currunt*

or, as an illustrious countryman of the O'Flaherty has it: "Seasons may roll—But the true soul—Burns the same wherever it goes." He carried to Russia the same yeasty ferment of rebellious Dublin that he had taken for a walk to the Canadian backwoods. That makes him now and then a bit obtuse to the psychology of the socialist upheaval—but he remains readable and amusing even where he is dense. "We have a kindness for Mr. Leigh Hunt," says Macaulay, with somewhat elephantine benevolence, in the lead-off to one of his essays. Well, we have a kindness for the O'Flaherty. In his introductory chapter he struts a little—but we would rather have him strut than point (like Mr. Chevy Chylye in "Martin Chuzzlewit" and H. G. Wells in his guinea-shovelling days) to the sneaking quarter of the moral compass. This is how he does his strutting:

"On the evening of April 23rd, 1930, I set out for Moscow on a Soviet ship, in order to collect material for a book on Bolshevism. It pains me to admit it, but it is the truth. I set out to join the great horde of scoundrels, duffers, and liars who have been flooding the book markets of the world for the past ten years with books about the Bolsheviks."

"Nowadays, owing to the growth of democracy and the machine, the profession of literature has ceased to be an art. It is an industry. Literary men, if they must eat by their work, are forced to watch the market and pander to the tastes of the public, just like any other class of manufacturers. Just as clothiers make green cloth, or blue cloth. . . . in accordance with the change of fashion, so must novelists write about sex or adventure or the Yellow Peril or psychoanalysis. At the moment, two kinds of books are in fashion, autobiographies and books about the Bolsheviks. I refrained from writing an autobiography as long as I could. At last I was forced by hunger to do so. Immediately afterwards I realized that I had to scavenge among the Bolsheviks or starve a little later. So I set out for Moscow with black anger in my heart against the whole of human society, which has become so corrupt and democratic and indifferent to art."

That defiant overture to his book is merely the Irish way of trying to regain one's self-possession, after a unique, an overwhelming experience. To cross over the border of a Baltic state into Soviet Russia, is to pass from the twentieth century into a crude outline of the twenty-first. To carry the turbulences and muddled vistas of insurrectionary Dublin to purposeful and sober Moscow, is like stepping from the Stygian darkness of a prison-cooler into the intolerable brilliance of a sunny noonday. To talk to the

Russians of the great Reconstruction is almost like conversing with disembodied spirits—their present of famine, fear, and savage faction is all but completely dissolved in their perspective of a glorious future. Such glimpses of other worlds than ours may well confound even a bould, bould lad from the banks of the Liffey, causing him to introduce his account with a gesture of swagger.

Considered as a fascicle of information about the new Russia, the book cannot stand comparison with such classical performances as the summaries of Anna Louise Strong, John Reed, and Dr. Max Hodann. O'Flaherty is under no delusion regarding the informative value of his book. "It is no use showing me the city (Leningrad) in detail and giving me figures and facts. I could see nothing and learn nothing. I know merely by intuition. I feel essences." The avowal should keep no one from reading "I Went to Russia." He really *did* feel the true essence of the new commonwealth, and he succeeds in transmitting his feeling to others. There are moments when he achieves brilliant critical generalizations. And if there are others when his Hibernian lights go out, his lucidities are more numerous than his lapses into



Illustration for "Ivan the Fool and Other Tales," by Tolstoy (Oxford University Press)

denseness, and the book is herewith commended to all readers.

Religious Fathers

FOUNDERS OF GREAT RELIGIONS. Being Personal Sketches of the Famous Leaders. By MILLAR BURROWS. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1931. \$2.

THE modest subtitle hardly does justice to this excellent volume. Besides giving, in an interesting manner, what is known about the lives of the nine founders of religions whom he considers—Lao-tze, Confucius, Mahavira, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Mohammed, Nanak, and Jesus—Professor Burrows makes in every case an illuminating study of the historical background and a clear analysis of the main principles of each of the religions. Particularly praiseworthy is his avoidance of the temptation to trace some fictitious principle of development running through all these religions and culminating, say, in Christianity. About the only common element which he finds in them is the recognition of transcendental sanctions for morality. All of them agree that it is possible for man to rise above his phenomenal experience and get in some sort of communion with an ultimate reality whose nature is reflected in the living of a good life on earth. But there is hopeless disagreement as to whether this ultimate reality is to be conceived as personal or impersonal, whether the good life consists in social service or in withdrawal, and whether it has a sequel in another life and, if so, of what character the sequel may be. It is a decidedly pluralistic world into which Professor Burrows takes one. The result might be mere confusion were it not for the clarity of the presentation which leaves in one's mind a series of distinct patterns.

I am JUDITH PARIS

*I am the daughter
of Rogue Herries and Mirabell the
gypsy girl, cursed with his imagina-
tion and her wild blood. I was
the mistress of one man, the wife
of a genteel murderer. My whole
life was one mad rebellion against
Uldale and the destiny of the Herries.*

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Abroad, this story of the fiery lady with the pale excited face and the red-gold hair is having the greatest success of any Walpole novel.

It is even more romantic than *Rogue Herries*, with more charm than *Wintersmoon*. It is a colorful picture of Napoleonic England. It is also an eloquent statement of the never-ending struggle between imagination and the matter-of-fact, which is English character.

It is complete in itself—though if you haven't read *Rogue Herries*, now in its 6th large edition, this story will probably impel you to do so.
\$2.50.

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN



JUDITH PARIS . . . the new novel by
HUGH WALPOLE