

have invariably followed. There is one question which remains. "How far," they ask me, "do your own books correspond to your philosophy of life and your view of history?" That is a question which it is impossible to answer. I should be much distressed were I to feel that my philosophy of life had become rigid and recognizable. That would indeed imply the arterio-sclerosis of later middle age. I should hesitate even to claim for myself a rigid view of history. Perhaps this very fluidity of conviction implies an attitude towards life, or at least a state of mind. If there be any recurrent thesis in my biographical work I suppose it is this: "Human error is a constant, and not an incidental, factor in history. Everybody is an ass sometimes, and most people are asses all the time. Human will power is an intermittent factor, and history has been made more frequently at moments when people had no idea what they wanted than at those rarer moments when some individual wanted something definite. We are all straws upon the stream: yet if one observes those straws they do not all behave in exactly the same manner." Were I to define my philosophy of history I should, I suppose, define it in some such terms.

"But what," you will say, "is the stream?" And to that I answer: "I have no idea whatsoever; I know only that it is there. And the more interesting straws behave in a manner different from that adopted by the less interesting straws. My passion for biography arises from a desire to examine that difference."

First Modern Soldier

(Continued from first page)

plunder, but strictly for the advantage of the state.

Around the squat, ugly figure of the Breton professional soldier, legends began to cluster early. He was so ugly that his mother could not bear the sight of him, and, though the eldest son of an aristocratic family, he was brought up by servants, as uncouth as a wild beast. Strange dreams announced his birth, and an old nun prophesied his future greatness. He passed his boyhood in organizing the peasant lads in mimic war, the same lads who later followed him to glory. A mere raw youth, he entered a great tournament in disguise and defeated all comers, being recognized only when he refused to raise his lance against his father. His early career was full of heroic exploits and daring stratagems, half Percival, half Robin Hood. Some of the anecdotes which adorn the pages of his earliest chroniclers may be true; others are suspiciously reminiscent of the romances of chivalry and the folk tales of Brittany. So, by the romantic imagination of the contemporaries, the first modern soldier was transformed into the figure of the last knight errant.

Both the recent biographies of Bertrand du Guesclin here reviewed make a very full use of the legends of the hero. Both of them treat his career in about the same proportions, giving as much space to the dubious early exploits as to the well authenticated later campaigns and repeating most of the same anecdotes of the early chroniclers. Neither author has always hesitated to fill in the gaps in our knowledge with conjecture, though in this Miss Coryn is much the worse offender. She tells us what Bertrand thought and felt and a good deal more about his relations to his wife than the chroniclers record. Partly because it is freer of this sort of padding and consequently shorter and better balanced, partly because it is somewhat more critical and scholarly, M. Verce's biography of Bertrand seems the better book. It suffers, however, from a clumsy literalness of translation which impedes its flow and sometimes distorts its meaning. "Lance," as in the phrase "two hundred lances"—i. e., two hundred men-at-arms, the steel-clad heavy cavalry, each man-at-arms accompanied by several light armed auxiliary soldiers—is regularly translated "lancers," a meaningless term in its context. The tactics referred to on page 220 are those of Hannibal at Cannæ; they have nothing to do with the city of Cannes. Neither of the two biographies is flawless. Both are clear, popular treatments of the life of the hero.

Portrait of a Nation

THE CHINESE: *Their History and Culture.* By Kenneth Scott Latourette. New York: The Macmillan Co. 2 vols. 1934. \$7.50.

Reviewed by L. CARRINGTON GOODRICH

HERE, at long last, is a history of China in English not to be ashamed of. For decades we have needed just such a work, and various attempts have been made to fill the gap, but without much success. Either they were too thin, like Dr. Latourette's own "Development of China" which was the best of the lot; or they displayed very faulty knowledge of the hydra-headed sources of Chinese history; or they were extremely uneven, giving disproportionate attention to one period of China's turbulent past; or they frankly treated but one fragment of the story and left the rest to another hand. Dr. Latourette has patiently explored these writings together with the generally far more significant monographs and incidental researches, many of them buried away in obscure journals, of scholars the world over, and presented us with a rounded, well documented, skillfully appraised survey of Chinese civilization in some 850 pages.

Perceval Yetts of London wrote once, in a review of an earlier attempt by two Americans to cover the history of China, that we would never get very far in such writing until each one of the twenty-five

explained other than by the long outworn story about the dream of a Han emperor. Professor Latourette, indefatigable bibliographer as he has been dubbed, has read too widely to permit of such oft repeated errors.

If any general fault may be found with the author's treatment it is that, like a model Confucian, he travels too much down the middle of the road. Often he makes us aware of radical departures from widely accepted interpretations of China's past, only to dismiss them as unproved or improbable. One occasionally wishes he were more daring. For instance, he notes that possibly the divination bones discovered near Anyang were of Chou dynasty origin. Surely enough proof has been adduced to put them unquestionably in the twelfth century B.C. or earlier. Similarly he is somewhat skeptical of the existence of bronzes prior to the Chou, and hesitates to put sculpture in the round back of the third century before our era. Let him examine the reports of the excavations in Honan of the last four years, commenced under the auspices of the Freer Gallery and carried through by the Academia Sinica. Conservatism in this rather virgin field is, however, a good fault.

There are a few minor sins of commission and omission. Dr. Latourette describes the bronzes made under the Chou as finer than those of an earlier period (if the Shang indeed ever fashioned any). There are at least two first rate authori-



THE TEMPLE OF HONAN
From an original sketch by Thomas Allom.

voluminous dynastic histories were translated into a European tongue with all the appropriate apparatus of prolegomena and critical commentary. But even such an enormous piece of work—essential as it is—would not complete the task. There would still remain the histories of special states, the unorthodox histories, particular histories, gazetteers, official documents, diaries, treatises on administration, law, geography, religion, the fine arts, etc., etc., almost without end. A most discouraging outlook, although brave attempts are being made this very year to conquer one or two of these obstacles. Until that great day some generations hence when all this body of knowledge is readily available, what we need is an occasional synthesis of existing information, expertly documented, with Chinese characters indicated for all doubtful names and expressions. The French have such a book in René Grousset's "Histoire de L'Extrême-Orient." Now we are provided, even more adequately for China alone, in the two volumes under review.

The first volume gives us in condensed form not only the political course of Chinese history from stone age times down to 1933, but as well running comment on advances (and retreats) in art, literature, philosophy, science, and social institutions. The second volume provides a series of essays on the life and achievements of the people, the whole capped by two indices and a map. It is a joy to this reviewer to find the myths of origin handled as the stuff of legend, rather than made to explain the shadowy beginnings of the first Chinese; a pleasure, too, to find the entrance of Buddhism on the Chinese scene

ties, one western and one Chinese, who think the Shang superior and have said so in print. This might at least have been mentioned. No notice is taken of the introduction during the middle of the first millennium B.C. of coined money. This must have had a profound and disintegrating effect, as it did in Greece about the same century, on the old aristocratic system, since it made possible the acquisition of wealth in some other form than in the soil, bringing about, as one student has written, "the rise of a class of nouveaux riches who could buy up, and probably often did buy up, the old landed aristocracy, lock, stock, and barrel." Han Fei Tzu and Wei Yang were not the first to suggest the idea of burning books and archives, thus getting rid of uncomfortable thoughts and precedents. It was probably a custom common among the ruling houses, for Mencius remarks that many of the princes had done this very thing before his day. Iron was surely not carried westward in the first or second centuries A.D. from the Chinese frontier to Rome. As the author himself concedes, only goods of small bulk and weight were so transported. Finally, there is no mention of the largest collective effort in literary compilation ever engaged in, possibly, by any people—the "Ssu K'u Ch'uan Shu"; nor of its accompanying Catalogue, which is a vade mecum to every scholar.

But these tiny spots detract but little from the great portrait which the author has drawn. It deserves a place in every gallery dealing with the Chinese. I for one recommend it unhesitatingly.

L. Carrington Goodrich is lecturer in Chinese at Columbia University.

A Synthesis of New Perspectives

THE HORIZON OF EXPERIENCE. By C. C. Delisle Burns. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. \$3.50.

Reviewed by IRWIN EDMAN

THIS book belongs to that small library which the professional philosopher can respect and which should prove genuinely educative for the common reader. It breaks no really new ground, though it has much to say of ground only recently broken. It is a fine piece of what the French call *vulgarization* (a much less vulgar business than the thing that goes by the name of popularization, especially of philosophy, in America). It is a civilized book for the civilized but not specialized reader, and it should enhance the cultivation of the specialist. It is marked for one thing by that wonderful (though I be slain as an Anglophile for saying it) union of dignity and colloquial ease, of literary background and robust common sense, which seem to come to flower for all sorts of reasons in England.

Mr. Burns is interested in an analysis of "experience," and a philosophy relevant to experience as it comes to us shaped at once by the traditions and materials of the past and the "horizon" toward which experience at any time is especially directed. There is, he points out, a rhythm of attention in the history of thought, directed at certain times to the assimilation of new factors in experience, at others, to the formulation of acquired experience. The Greeks, the medievals, and the nineteenth century were, on the whole, engaged in formulating acquired experience, which is to say, making a synthesis. We are now in a third period of assimilation of new factors. "The modern mind has again an acute sense of the horizon."

It is this sense of the horizon that Mr. Burns tries to analyze in the fields of religion, science, and social life. Philosophy is, or should be in our age, a synthesis of the new perspectives opening those regions of human enterprise. He makes clear how much science is the exploration of new hypotheses and the formulation of untried possibilities. He indeed identifies the method of science at its most fruitful with that of art at its most disciplined and imaginative. Art, for him in a double sense, constitutes a horizon. For in art new values are always being broached and made incarnate, and in modern art there are unprecedented intimations of hitherto undreamed of values, and radical innovations in the technique and possibility of their realization. This "subconscious" now so much a theme of literature was a world of value hitherto beyond the horizon of art, and there are experimental forms which have only recently swept into our ken.

In morals and religions, finally, there is in recent feeling and thinking a growing sense of new horizons. Morality is not a completed and finished system of rules, to be applied, but a form of art. The old syntheses have broken down, and there are hints and urgings toward a new union of discipline and freedom which imply for their realization a new and collective social order whose form is hardly as yet surmised. In respect to religion, there is much the same situation. Conscious modernism is less important than the breakdown of the old certainties. "Religion is a kind of art; religions differ not as better or worse (Mr. Burns might also have said as true or false) but as different angles of vision." The glamour, poetry, and insight of the old tradition are themselves impediments to newer ways of thinking in religion. But even religion is turning from God as a substance with attributes to the notion of a progressive movement toward an ideal. It is the cosmic poetry of the growth and clarification of human aspiration.

Mr. Burns's book is marked by a gratifying awareness of the materials of art, science, religion, and simple human feeling out of which the materials of philosophy must in the first and perhaps in the last instance come.

Irwin Edman is a professor of philosophy at Columbia University.

The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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We Are On Our Way

Criticism proceeds by simplifications, though it is destroyed by oversimplification. One who studies an age or a tendency must shake the dice again and again, in the hope of rolling out a lucky number which explains what hitherto has been confused. No one set of generalizations serves; each new philosophy of literature must have its own categories, and even the most elementary distinctions in an era of change may be of use.

Thus in American writing of the time that is still the present or the immediate past for readers of middle age, certain broad and interlocking purposes begin to emerge as significant by contrast to the new interests, new purposes, which are so vigorous if so confusing in the thirties of our century. It may be said with at least sufficient truth that narrative engrossed the nineties and the first decade of the twentieth century; description the nineteen tens and twenties; and a search for new values the years since the great boom burst.

There must be many not yet old who remember the fascinated pleasure of the best American writers of the nineties in the neatness, the grace, the agility of narrative. Substance was of little importance so long as it was pleasing, expression was everything, and the short-story writer who could deal his cards to a grand slam with never a hesitancy in the playing felt that he had attained Art. Short stories were mechanical in their construction then, but it was the mechanics of fresh invention; and if mechanics in the novel were not fresh, at least they were confident. Form was an ideal, which promised the highest success. To do it beautifully was the ambition of both journalist and the worshipper of preciosity. When we grow less serious some of those *jeux d'esprits* of fiction (fewer of poetry) will come to their own again. There is more to be said for H. C. Bunner and Richard Harding Davis than the realists will admit.

Then came that subtle change in the American mind which marked the second coming-of-age of our writers (the first was local, in New England). Description of an America which the narrative playboys had only sipped from, like butterflies, became the fashion for writers of real ambition. The short story descended to the popular magazine, the romantic novel headed toward the movies of the future, Dreiser, Lewis, and all that tribe began the painstaking description of the American scene, sometimes photographic,

sometimes satiric, but always inspired by the new accuracy required by social science, and the faith in the potency of fact which was an article in materialism. The realism of the tens, which became the naturalism or the satiric mimicry of the twenties, was essentially descriptive. The story was no longer important, the characters as personalities were not important, description, supposedly accurate and certainly far closer to behavior than anything we ever had before, was the ideal. And description of this kind is still, though in decadence, the earmark of the serious American novel.

But only an earmark. It is quite clear that for some time now we have been living in a different intellectual climate. The proletarian novels and plays, usually Marxian, are enough to prove it. Not because they are Marxian; that, since no political compulsion has as yet borne down upon American literature, is merely an evidence that the new writer is no longer content with description. He is searching (in poetry, in the drama, in the essay, in fiction) for a new view of living. He is experimenting with philosophies because, like the community at large, of which he is merely the sensitized disk and voice, he is newly concerned with values in an age when most ways of living, most ideals of living, most conceptions of success, are suspect or condemned. It was Babbitt who in the twenties said that he had never done anything he really wanted to do in his life. But that was at the end of his book; his lament was the conclusion, not the theme, of that great novel of satiric description. The new American writers (and we hazard a prophecy with more confidence than usual) are already concerned, and will soon be committed, to values, esthetic, social, perhaps moral most of all, and will be indifferent to either story or description until new imaginative conceptions of values in living become emotionally powerful and are ripe for a perfected art. Toward this goal the intellectualist poetry of an Eliot, the traditionalist studies of a Cather, the Marxian frameworks (so stiff and unreal) of the proletarianists, the poetry of industrialism of a MacLeish, and even the humors of *The New Yorker*, all are moving. To say nothing of parallel instances of even greater point in the literature of Europe. What form the new literature will take depends upon the talents that go into it. But we are on our way.

After two years of research the laboratory of the American Foundation for the Blind has perfected the process by which Talking Books, and their reproducer, the reading machine, have been developed. The first group of these books will be ready for circulation in the twenty-four libraries having departments for the blind in the near future. The books have been selected by a committee appointed by the Library of Congress for the purpose, and their publication and distribution by the Library made possible by the use of a part of the Federal appropriation of \$100,000 yearly for books for the blind. In addition to the four Gospels and the Psalms, six patriotic documents, and three plays by Shakespeare, the first list of books includes five books of fiction, "As the Earth Turns," by Gladys Hasty Carroll, E. M. Delafeld's "Diary of a Provincial Lady," Kipling's "The Brushwood Boy," Masefield's "The Bird of Dawning," and P. G. Wodehouse's "Very Good, Jeeves." New titles will be added continually. The research was underwritten by the Carnegie Corporation and philanthropic individuals.



"WE'RE ALL OUT OF 'THE THIN MAN.' WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN 'CORRECTIVE EATING'?"

To the Editor: A Challenge to Austenites; The Lincoln-Beecher Story

A Call for Janeites

SIR:—I always read with very great pleasure the notes on Holmesiana and the doings of the Baker Street Irregulars that appear from time to time in the *Bowling Green*. I want to suggest that you offer an opportunity in your columns for another literary group to chat together. The people I refer to are the Janeites. Does such a society exist in any organized form outside Kipling's story? If so, I feel an urgent need for communication with it. I have just finished a periodical rereading of Jane Austen's works, and I found among my particular circle of friends none who could even adequately appreciate my enthusiasm, far less enter into various speculations that this reading had engendered in my mind. Of two people to whom I mentioned "Pride and Prejudice," one had read neither it nor any of the others, and the other (this will scarcely be believed!) had started but never finished it. Therefore I turn to you.

I suggest a few of the questions I should like to have answered. Have others arrived, as I have, at the conclusion that the bilious fever, of which Mrs. Tilney died so suddenly, would in these days have been diagnosed as appendicitis? What is the rest of the charade, "Kitty, a fair but frozen maid"? How many of Jane's admirers know the passage on p. 102 of "All Trivia" where Pearsall Smith expresses so perfectly what they must all feel?

Couldn't you encourage some such exchange of thought among the Janeites such as that enjoyed by the Baker Street Irregulars? While the latter read Clark Russell, and discuss Holmes's religion, couldn't we write of our meetings with contemporary Mrs. Bennets or Admiral Crofts, or make pledges to eat fricasseeed sweetbreads and a little well-boiled asparagus on December 16th?

ELIZABETH FRY.

Oakmont, Pa.

Beecher and Lincoln

SIR:—In your otherwise admirable review of my book, "Saints, Sinners and Beechers," published in the *Saturday Review* of May 5th, I take exception to your statement that I am not a critical historian because I related the story of Lincoln calling upon Henry Ward Beecher "one dark and stormy night in 1862."

Had I stated this episode as a fact you would most certainly have been justified in accusing me of being uncritical. As a matter of fact, I stated that "this story has been affirmed and denied by an approximately equal number of reliable persons," and I further stated that "it seems to me to accord with both Lincoln's informality and his shrewd sense that he should have sought opportunity for an undisclosed talk with such a powerful moulder of public opinion."

In other words, I specifically admitted that the episode is not authenticated, but since the evidence, for and against it,

seemed to me approximately equal, I felt justified in expressing as my personal opinion that it did occur. While you have certainly a perfect right to disagree and hold the opinion that it did not occur, it doesn't seem to me that you can justly accuse me of being uncritical in this matter. Also it seems to me that you should have stated that I did not assert the episode as a fact.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for the excellence of your review in general? I particularly liked its opening. No other reviewer, so far as I know, called attention to the climactic year, 1852, in the Beecher family.

LYMAN BEECHER STOWE.

New York City.

Nolte's Page Numbers

SIR:—A few weeks ago I read the review of the reprint of "The Memoirs of Vincent Nolte" which appeared in the *Saturday Review*. In the course of that article, note was made of the fact that the table of contents did not always agree with the paging of the text.

The Brooklyn Public Library has three copies of the American edition bearing the date of 1854. One of these copies agrees in the number of pages with the reprint recently issued with an introduction by Burton Rascoe. Examination would indicate that this is a second edition of the book, although it was published with the same date as the edition which is apparently the first.

What I take to be the first edition has several pages which were apparently added after the book was in type. For example, on reaching page 218, the compositor uses a star to designate additional pages which run to page 225 and then goes back again to page 218. The result is that the last page of the first edition is No. 476 instead of 484.

One must assume that in a second printing the proper pagination was given without going to the trouble of correcting the paging in the table of contents.

MILTON J. FERGUSON.

Brooklyn Public Library
Brooklyn, N. Y.

The Western Literary Messenger

SIR:—I am preparing to write a history of the *Western Literary Messenger*, a magazine published in Buffalo, N. Y., in the "fabulous forties" and the "feverish fifties" of the last century. My father, Jesse Clement, was connected with the magazine, first as a contributor and then as editor. I shall be very much obliged to any one who can give me information concerning material, especially in the form of letters. There are incomplete files of the magazine available here and there; but the early volumes (I-IV) are scarce. Any information bearing directly or indirectly upon this subject will be gratefully received.

ERNEST W. CLEMENT.

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The Saturday Review recommends

This Group of Current Books:

BREATHE UPON THESE SLAIN. By EVELYN SCOTT. Smith & Haas. A saga of a family built about family portraits.

ESCAPE FROM THE SOVIETS. By TATIANA TCHERNAVIN. Dutton. The experiences of a Russian woman who suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Soviets.

THE MONEY MUDDLE. By JAMES P. WARBURG. Knopf. Discussion of the money and banking situation.

This Less Recent Book:

DARK HAZARD. By W. R. BURNETT. Harpers. The story of a gambler.