



BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

First Choices

IN the last Children's Bookshop, I mentioned the eternal appeal to children of animal books. Well, here are two outstanding ones: "Animals of the Bible," by Dorothy P. Lathrop, with text selected by Helen Dean Fish from the King James Bible (Stokes: \$2), and "Sam," by Edward Quigley and John Crawford (Stackpole: \$2.50). Dorothy Lathrop's pictures have great distinction and beauty, and a gallery of animals that includes the ravens that fed Elijah, Abraham's ram, the Scapegoat, Balaam's ass, Behemoth, Leviathan, Isaac's camels, etc., is obviously a distinguished one. No better introduction to the splendid language of the Bible, for a small child, could be imagined. "Sam" is another cat book, but in this case the cat is photographed throughout, and with memorable art. The text is, moreover, more observant of actual cat-life than the average. In the realm of fairy tale and legend I nominate the new edition of Grimm's Fairy Tales, issued by Stackpole Sons (\$2.75), illustrated by Fritz Kredel, whom some consider the greatest living woodcutter. "The White Stag," by Kate Seredy, strikingly illustrated by the author (Viking Press: \$2), tells the epic story of the migration of the Huns and Magyars (the author's remote ancestors). Letterpress and illustration are all of a piece, both decorative and dramatic.

For somewhat older children, and important for school reading, is Gertrude Hartman's "Medieval Days and Ways" (Macmillan: \$2.50). It tells how people lived in Europe during the Middle Ages, and is packed with information, both textual and pictorial. Two other Macmillan books above the average are "Tommy Thatcher Goes to Sea," by Berta and Elmer Hader (for boys and girls of from eight to twelve: \$2), a good story unusually well illustrated in water-color; and "Alice-All-by-Herself," by Elizabeth Coatsworth, the poet, whose children's books have been so delightful and successful. This is for children the same age as the other, at the same price, with pictures by Marguerite de Angeli. The Domino Press, which was the first publishing house to issue children's books in Paris for simultaneous publication in France, England, and America, now brings out in New York "The Voyages of Jacques Cartier" (\$3), which is the authentic story of that courageous French sea-captain who sailed beyond Newfoundland to seek the Northwest Passage to China, and found the St. Lawrence River. Here, as the story is retold by Esther Averill and illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky, it has a special attraction. For very little folk the most artistic flat books are (1) the first of a series about a gnome named Pixie Pete, "Pixie Pete's Christmas Party,"

by Sam Berman and Phineas O'Mellish, (Modern Age Books, Inc.: 25c), all fantastic pictures in color that remind me somewhat of the art of Lawson Wood, and (2) "Suki: The Siamese Pussy," by Leonard Weisgard (Thomas Nelson & Sons: \$2), which, though rather affected in its text, is lively and artistic in its decoration. Such then are my first choices.

More Animals

And now I shall retrace my steps and discuss some other animal books for the very young. Marjorie Flack has two (besides the one recommended in my last review). They are "Lucky Little Lena" (Macmillan: \$1), a very simple tale for all small city children, copiously illustrated, and "The Restless Robin" (Houghton Mifflin: \$1.50), which is really informative about robins and other birds, as well as about bright with color. Sanford Tousey, who draws horses particularly well, and formerly gave us "Jerry and the Pony Express" among other children's books, tells the tale of "Chinky the Banker Pony" (Doubleday, Doran: \$1), a native of Chincoteague Island. "The Fisherman and His Cat" is written and pictured by Josephine De Witt (Thomas Nelson & Sons: \$1.25) and features an enormous fish known as Heywood, which somehow inevitably suggests a famous New York collyumnist! "Sammy Squirrel Goes to Town," by Elizabeth Honness and Pelagie Doane (also Thomas Nelson: \$1.50), is an original sort of animal story, and "Pepe and The Parrot," by Ellis Credle (Thomas Nelson: \$2) about a little Mexican dog—the color scheme being all red and green—is more individual than either, text and pictures blending to excellent effect.

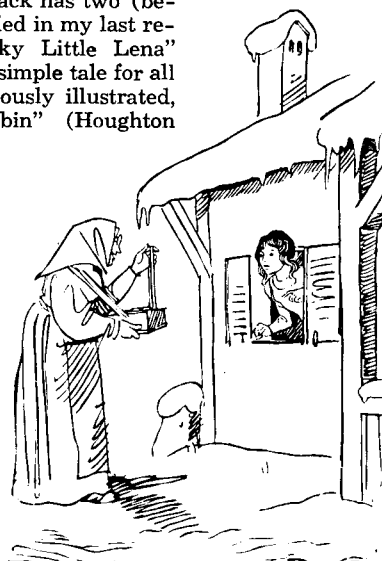
Modern Age Books publishes at 75c "You are . . ." by Emery J. Gondor, something new in puzzle books for children by a fantastic artist who is a favorite with the youth of Europe. These forty-nine picture puzzles, in black and white and bright color, will even challenge the wits of a parent or two. For little girls, the charming small book about "Marta," written by Marguerite Vance and illustrated by Mildred Boyle (Harper: \$1), is to be recommended; and a Minnesota Norwegian who was encouraged by no less a writer than O. E. Rolvaag, Olav K.

Lundeberg, gives us "The Enchanted Valley"—a charming story and legend of Christmas in Telemark in the old time (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House: \$1) with Eldrid Thorpe's illustrations. Edna Knowles King's famous collection of dolls is illustrated by over a hundred photographs, with text, in "A Doll's Family Album" (Albert Whitman: \$1.50), and "The Land of Lost Dolls," by Hector Fezandíe, illustrated by Victor Perard, is a fairy story about dolls and pets (Thomas F. Kyle, \$2).

Older Fiction

Two collections, one of good stories and one of native American verse, are "A Treasure Box of Stories for Children," by May Lamberton Becker (Little, Brown: \$2.50), and "I Hear America Singing," an anthology of folk poetry collected by Ruth A. Barnes and illustrated by Robert Lawson (Winston: \$2). From Lothrop, Lee and Shepard comes Alan M. Buck's story of Saint Patrick of Ireland called "My Saint Patrick" (\$2), while other fiction for children ranges from "Baby Island," by Carol Ryrie Brink, pictures by Helen Sewell (Macmillan: ages eight to twelve, \$2) through "This Is Petra" by Alice Blackburn Dungan (Lippincott: \$2), a charming fantasy of an imaginative little orphan and her animated shadow; and "Susan Beware!" by Mabel Leigh Hunt (pictures by Mildred Boyle), telling of a tomboy of Indiana in the 70's (Stokes: \$1.75). Older children's books include "Smoke Blows West," by Helen Clark Fernald (Longman's: \$2), "Homespun," by Erick Berry (Lothrop, Lea & Shepard: \$2), and Jennings C. Wise's "On the Way to Periguan" (New York: The Paisley Press, Inc.: \$2.50).

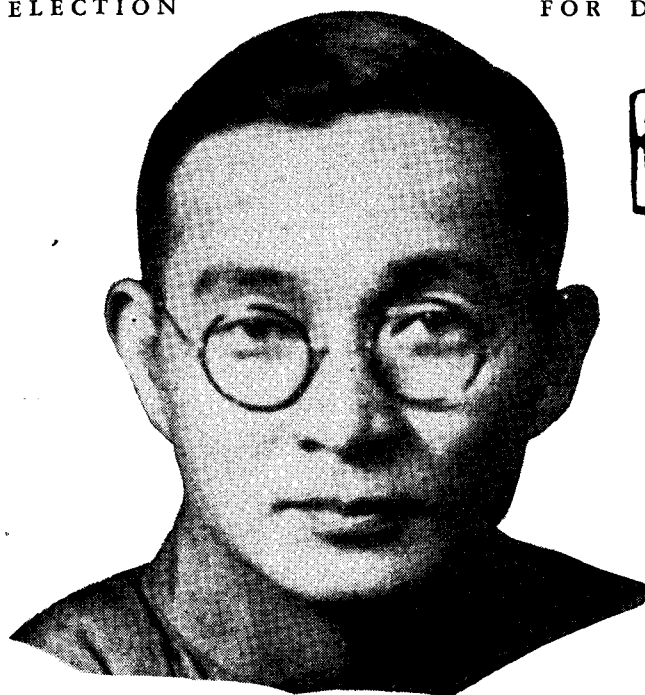
To conclude this resumé with books of a more general nature, Albert Whitman presents Lt.-Colonel George R. Hutchinson's "Flying the States," (\$2) wherein Hutchinson and his wife and two daughters, "the Flying Family," visit all forty-eight states by plane; Alida Sims Malkus gives us a unique prose saga of the early Polynesian seafarers in "Eastward Sweeps the Current" (Winston: \$2. Excellent illustrations by Dan Sweeney); Lincoln and Margaret MacVeagh tell of their "Greek Journey" (Dodd, Mead: \$2) in an admirable travel book illustrated by Michel Doris, for boys and girls of ten years or older; and last, but not least, comes a book that will appeal to parents as well as to older children, in the complete story of Antarctic exploration from the earliest times, "Antarctic Icebreakers," by Lorene Fox (Doubleday, Doran: \$2.50). There are many photographic illustrations.



WOODCUT BY FRITZ KREDEL
From "Grimm's Fairy Tales."

LIFE doesn't consist of achievement, in making a fortune, in the mental sallies of philosophers or the imaginative flights of poets. Life rather consists in the enjoyment of ourselves and one another, of home, of rocks and trees and stars and sounds or, to quote directly, "in having a haircut once in two weeks, or watering a potted flower, or watching a neighbor fall off his roof."

—so says



LIN YUTANG

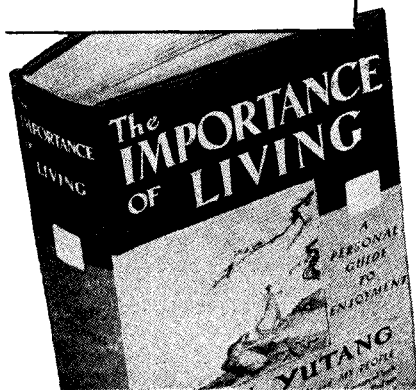
Author of *MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE*

in his new book:

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING

Here You Will Find:

The Scamp as Ideal
This Earth the Only Heaven
On Having a Stomach
On Having a Mind
On Playful Curiosity
On Being Wayward and Incalculable
The "Philosophy of Half-and-Half"
Chin's Thirty-three Happy Moments
Man the Only Working Animal
The Chinese Theory of Leisure
Three American Vices
On Getting Biological
On Sex Appeal
On Growing Old Gracefully
On Lying in Bed
On Tea and Friendship
On Food and Medicine
On the Inhumanity of Western Dress
The Epigrams of Chang Ch'ao
—and hundreds of other topics.



IN Dr. Lin's *My Country and My People* there were broad hints of an outlook on living which comprehends both East and West, and throws on American life the light of Oriental perceptions. Now he offers for the first time a complete and matured work in this vein—too human to be called philosophy, too honest to be classed with so-called "self-help" books. Gayly serious, profoundly naive, cynically kind, shot through with a sense of comedy and backed by science, as well as by the thoughts of the Chinese sages of many centuries, it brings forth the salt and flavor and tang of life. The book distills for the Western world the Chinese philosophy of three thousand years, in the hope that it may bring help to men and women who have not yet learned, as the Chinese have, that the meaning of life lies just in living itself.

At All Bookstores \$3.00

a JOHN DAY book • REYNAL & HITCHCOCK, N. Y.

Pointing the way to PEACE for America: THE FINAL CHOICE, by Stephen and Joan Raushenbush

A New Language for Greek Drama

THREE GREEK PLAYS. Translated by Edith Hamilton. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by THEODRIC WESTBROOK

MISS HAMILTON here presents translations of Aeschylus's "Prometheus Bound" and "Agamemnon" and of Euripides's "Trojan Women"; there are introductions with clear, swift comment upon plots and characters and some fresh interpretations, such as Miss Hamilton's choosing Job rather than the too youthful Satan for a parallel to Prometheus, and the frank use of Ocean as a comic character. She is rarely insensitive to dramatic values, but she fails to see that Aigisthus is good drama and that his coming back into Clytaemnestra's life as a sudden and almost forgotten burden after her triumph makes the last lines of the "Agamemnon" heavy with the weight of coming boredom and shame.

As a translator, Miss Hamilton feels that we are now ready to discard the dated languages of Pope, Browning, Mr. Gilbert Murray, and the Loeb authors and to put in their stead an idiom more nearly approaching the directness of Greek expression. She then offers us these three translations in what she considers such an idiom—a form with lines of varied lengths and varied meters for the choruses, and a five beat line, generously varied, for the dialogue; her vocabulary is starkly Nordic rather than Latin in its sources, with many monosyllables and short hard words. She uses this idiom most extremely in the "Trojan Women": when the chorus is fearful of what Cassandra in her madness may do, they say, with Mr. Murray's permission,

O hold the damsel, lest her tranced feet
Lift her afar, Queen, toward the Hel-
lene fleet!

but to Miss Hamilton's command

Hold her fast, Queen, poor frenzied
girl.
She might rush straight to the Greek
camp.

In choral parts there is often more melody:

Your dewy baths are gone
and the race-course where you ran.
Yet your young face keeps the beauty
of peace
in joy, by the throne of Zeus.

This longing to put Euripides into simple language is sure to come sadly upon the realization that he is the most difficult person to treat in this way, because he is sometimes plain but often complicated and sometimes delicate, and that the confusion of his emotional and mental states is a harder challenge to the translator than the clearer thought of Aeschylus. For though Euripides was a rebel in his own day, with his new words and his new music he loosened rather than destroyed tradition, and he is still inside the long and confidently trusted group of poets who learned from Homer.

Miss Hamilton forces upon herself an

idiom that breaks radically with immediately previous styles; it cannot be a perfect instrument, for such an idiom before it can be of service to poetry must pass into the subconscious and come back as a birthright; it is not surprising, then, that many of her lines fall apart into fragments, thereby missing the tightness of phrase in the Greek line, that her rhythms are treacherous, that her language is brittle.

This idiom is too strange a messenger to our hearts; it stabs us into consciousness but does not move us. Yet where she uses it in some compromise with richer language and easier rhythms, as in parts of the Aeschylus translations, we appreciate the freshness of her view; and though we may still remember Mr. Murray's mystic phrases and haunting melodies, we long, too, to see the vigor of the newer manner grow in finesse and achieve its strength, for in Miss Hamilton's use of it there are intimations of power.

Theodric Westbrook is in the department of classics at Columbia University.

Fiction Goes to Hell

LUCIFER AT LARGE. By C. John McCole. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1937. \$3.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER COWIE

THERE is no doubt about what Mr. McCole means. He means that the twentieth-century American novel has been dragged unnecessarily through mires of pessimism, pornography, and brutality by a crew of blasphemous, whining defeatists who are unable or unwilling to "see a pattern in life." Their philosophy is engendered in a puddle of determinism; and their technique is often as loose as their thinking, especially when they resort to the stream of consciousness. Lucifer appears in the various forms of Dreiser, Cabell, Anderson, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Hemingway, Saroyan, Farrell, and Wolfe. At the end, by way of contrast, the author calls the roll of certain good angels of the novel, among them Willa Cather and Margaret Mitchell.

"Lucifer at Large" is no mere random complaint but a substantial indictment based upon charges thoroughly investigated and cogently presented. Yet justice is imperiled when a critic plays the prosecuting attorney instead of the judge. Mr. McCole frequently "concedes" merits in the novelist under examination, but it is plain from the beginning that he is out for convictions. The moralist in him is so aroused that the critic cannot be free. He heavily censures all novelists who reflect sordid fact except those who possess what he regards as a satisfactory "vision" of life. Yet perchance some of these novelists are honestly confused and depressed by life. As for the dishonest ones—the peddlers of pornography and sadism—if they have dug up too much dirt and too little gold, would it not be better for the critic to spend less time in fingering the dirt and more in assaying such metal as it does contain? Better still, let him work in richer regions.

Revolutionary Gospel

THE LIFE OF JESUS. By Conrad Noel. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1937. \$3.75.

Reviewed by DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

THIS striking and original economic interpretation of the life of Jesus is written by a man who believes ardently in Christian theology and is also a revolutionist and a great admirer of Lenin. The Reverend Mr. Noel (grandson of an Earl and graduate of Cambridge University) is Vicar of a Church of England parish, from the tower of which he flew, during the war, the flag of St. George, the Sinn Fein flag, and the red flag all at once. The same unusual combination of convictions is represented with energy, eloquence, sincerity, and learning in this picture of Jesus as the champion of the economically oppressed, on which Mr. Noel has been working and pondering for thirty years. The book is a sort of boomerang:—sure to be hurled with eager enthusiasm at the heads of communists by orthodox church people, and by communists at theologians, and in each case to return with speed and accuracy to knock hard on the skull of the thrower.

In between these two extremes are large numbers of potential readers who certainly should not miss the book, intelligent men of good will, who have more or less consciously turned away from the great figure of Jesus the Christ, because they have seen him only in cautious ecclesiastical image of introverted, self-regarding, save-your-own soul personal piety. The Jesus of Conrad Noel's devotion is the inheritor of a mighty tradition of social justice and decent communal responsibility for the poor, which is embodied in the great laws of Moses for the protection of the economically weak from the ruthlessness of the economically strong. Those tremendous seven and fifty year measures to stop the dangerous snow-balling of the poverty of the debtor and the wealth of the creditor—how strangely the nineteenth-century theologians of all churches have ignored them, and made the rest of us ignore them!

Of course, in the nature of things, a book about Jesus written by a believing clergyman who is also a social revolutionist, is bound to excite all kinds of readers, just as those three flags flying over a church tower must have excited beholders of all convictions. Orthodox believers will be exasperated and grieved by the author's uncompromising, active revolutionary spirit of indignant sympathy for the victims of contemporary society, hunger-marchers included, and for his bold untactful attacks on modern corruption, greed, and injustice, calling names and specifying places. And certainly revolutionists, who will glory in his identification of Jesus's "Kingdom of Heaven" as the commonwealth of social justice longed for by radicals, will reel back at the contact with his sincere early-Christian devoutness. It may possibly do them both good to read the book!

Among Dorothy Canfield Fisher's numerous books is a translation of Pappini's "Christ" from the Italian.