

Pilgrim's Pride

(Continued from first page)

ican living in America constructs his personal interpretation out of the diversity around him. Yet at the same time the book will suggest to any American reader who is honest with himself the extent to which all interpretation is circumscribed, the degree in which his own ideas of his nation rest not upon actual experience or observation or upon the immense reality involved, but upon literary conventions, points of view devised and propagated by others.

The American reader will see an idea uncritically advanced by one of these authors; he will recognize it and accept it as an admirably true statement. Then he sees it turn up in an article by another on another subject, and presently it reappears again, and the reader begins to have an uneasy sense that these men, while observing with their own eyes, have also been reading each other. And then he realizes that his own knowledge of "America" is made up of reading quite as much as of seeing, and in the end the world which he has woven and wrapped around himself begins to give here and there, to rip and come apart, and he may conclude with a curiously naked feeling before a reality which after all cannot be tamed by any method, cannot be seen except by first blinding one's self to nine-tenths of what is really there.



The German reader will feel that now at last he has the data upon which he can devise his own picture of America. The thoughtful American reader will feel only that now at last he knows that no real picture can ever be devised. Among the forty-six competent, observant, and intelligent people who contribute to the symposium there are not more than one or two whose voices seem to speak directly out of their own American experience, undiluted by the literary or artistic conventions which so many of us accept as the reality of our lives. It is Stuart Chase who writes about industrial management, not an industrial manager. It is Fred C. Kelly, a contemplative speculator, who writes about Wall Street, not Mr. Richard C. Whitney. And nobody writes about politics at all.

The subject was excluded because, as Mr. Ringel says, it appeared "to be an esoteric phenomenon, characterized by more or less skillful and exhilarating showmanship in Washington, but of no direct relation with the American people." No doubt this is true enough; but it is the observation of the critic, not of the person who is experiencing America. Our politics may be a relatively unimportant influence in our history, but vast numbers of us still follow the showmanship with a lively interest, and believe that it is important even if it is not. To include a chapter on sports and leave out one on politics is to reveal that this method of interpretation, factual and catholic as it may seem, is actually only less artificial and selective than that of M. Siegfried, in which a single mind passes the whole in review and supplies an artistically unified view of an infinity of objective fact.

Americans of the more or less "intellectual" minority will read this book with great interest, though they will appreciate in the end that it gives, not a picture

of America, but a picture of what American intellectuals think about it. Americans of that vast, varied, and not particularly "intellectual" majority which actually molds and makes the substance about which the rest of us think, simply will not read the book at all. For they, as Mr. Leacock says, do not give a damn. "That is their salvation."

Walter Millis, an editorial writer for The Herald-Tribune, is the author of the excellent "The Military Spirit," a history of the Spanish-American War.

The Edge of Disaster

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items being repeated dozens of times in respect to different regions. I shudder at the thought of reading the bigger Results which will follow from the expedition described in "Across the Gobi Desert." Yet I am keen to see them because I know that they will contain much grist about climatic changes for my mill and much grist of other sorts for other people.

When such a man passes the age of sixty and is still looking for something bigger to do, what shall he undertake? The obvious answer is another trip to Central Asia which will surpass the large and highly organized expeditions sent out by the American Museum of Natural History under Roy Chapman Andrews. When such a man has been publicly kicked by the British because of German sympathies during the World War, what sort of scientists and aviators shall he take with him? Swedes and Germans, of course, with perhaps a Dane or Norwegian tucked in. So in 1925 we find Hedin in Peiping negotiating with the Chinese authorities for permission to explore their innermost secrets. Here we come to another thing which is scarcely mentioned in the book, but is everywhere apparent, namely, the psychology of the Chinese. The leaders of that country have lately become self-conscious and nationalistic. They believe that they are as capable as anyone. They do not like to have foreigners come over in our superior fashion and discover their scientific secrets for them. Still less do they like to have us carry away their ancient treasures of art and archaeology. Hence there was strong opposition to the proposed expedition. But Hedin is very tactful, persuasive, and persistent. Therefore after two years of discussion an agreement was reached whereby the expedition was to have a dual leadership—Swedish and Chinese—with a goodly allowance of Chinese scientists. Hedin passes over all this very lightly, just hinting at the interesting tale which he might tell. Then he plunges into his narrative. Being a journalist, and a very good one, he wrote his book day by day as he travelled slowly westward on a camel north of the Great Chinese Wall. At first there were no adventures, and Hedin saw almost nothing of the people because he was so completely engrossed in his caravan. Accordingly he introduces us to his company, tells how they all lived and travelled from day to day, and what great discoveries they are going to make. He also praises his Chinese and Swedish companions to the skies, expatiating on how easy it is to run a big expedition if you have the right men. Above all he dwells on the bigness of his caravan. It forms "a majestic, overpowering prospect" with its 60 men and 300



A KIRGHIZ WITH A HUNTING EAGLE
(From Sven Hedin's "Across the Gobi Desert.")

camels. His executive assistant is Larson, "that youth 57 years old [who] . . . has spent 34 years in Mongolia. . . . Nothing escapes his attention. . . . He reports to me all the news of the day in his broadest Västmanlandish. . . . He seats himself on the box to the right of my writing-table, and twiddles his fingers round his cap. . . . In the darkest hours he always remained calm, the same as I."

When the camels had been collected and the caravans finally started, there was some real excitement. Part of the animals were so fat that they had to be given a three-day fast. When they were loaded the first time they became "all quite mad," and the story of their madness is extremely good. Frightened by the boxes on their backs, about 150 of them ran away, banging into one another and throwing off their boxes as they ran. One was reported as still running thirty miles away. It took three days to gather the animals and boxes together again, and even then three camels were missing. In spite of this the journey was for a long time relatively uneventful. So Hedin has a great deal to say about when and where he drank his tea, how he drew his maps, and how many orders he gave to his subordinates. The curious thing about it is that he tells all these petty details and makes all his self-appreciative remarks in such a pleasant, hearty way that the reader quite enjoys both the book and the author.

Nevertheless one is glad to get beyond these incidents and come to the real adventures. They were lively enough. Hedin became ill and had to be carried on a stretcher. Then, finally, he had to be left behind in the dead of a terribly cold winter. The various parties which he sent ahead to bring a cart and provisions were met by the Chinese as if they were the vanguard of an invading army. In fact, that is just what the Chinese officials in Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan thought they were. Rumor had it that thousands of soldiers were marching with Hedin across the desert, and other thousands were called out to meet them and fight with them.

The climax of the book is dramatic. Here is the setting: A visit by Hedin long ago to a desert of clay and salt and to the salt lake of Lop-Nor where no man of European race had ever been before; a sweeping prophecy as to great changes in the location of the lake; an absence of over a quarter of a century during which only two other Europeans saw the place; much discussion of the prophecy and some ridicule of it among savants. Now comes the final act. Hedin returns and triumphs. Lop-Nor has done what he said it would do. It has changed its position and is sixty miles north of where he saw it, but just where he said it would be. Hedin's luck? Perhaps so. But it takes a very keen mind to have such luck.

Ellsworth Huntington, an expert in geography and the history of climate, has himself explored the Gobi Desert.

Rothenstein Redivivus

MEN AND MEMORIES: Recollections of William Rothenstein, 1900-1922. New York: Coward-McCann. 1932. \$5.

Reviewed by CHRISTIAN BRINTON

NOT the sprightly, savorsome eighteenth century chroniclers at their best surpass in completeness, nor approach in swift-caught precision, Sir William Rothenstein in "Men and Memories." The period covered in the second instalment conducts us from 1900 to 1922, and reveals the artist-author silhouetted against a background now smugly Edwardian, now swept by the surging tides of the World War. The formative phases of his career being over, he herewith settles down in searching, acquisitive eagerness to professional preoccupations and to the cementing of those friendships that are in effect the *raison d'être* of the current volume. Too urbane to project himself oppressively in the foreground, Sir William, through copious citation of correspondence, by means of apt anecdote and judiciously distributed emphasis, permits his dramatis personæ to portray themselves. The result is uniquely stimulating. Nowhere else does one meet such a piquant panorama of the first two decades of the present century. Artists, litterateurs, savants, statesmen, and the merely military, parade rapidly before the unappeared eye, each deftly, accurately individualized and evaluated.

As before, one readily divines where the artist-author's proper sympathies lie, and where one is likely to encounter a touch of humanly acid antipathy. Oscar has verily gone the way of flesh, and Beardsley's Pierrot candle has burnt out, but the heart still warms to rebel John and sensuous lyrical Conder, the latter soon to drift off to his own Ile de Cythère. To these are shortly added Conrad, Hudson, Wells, Drinkwater, Steer, Orpen, Epstein, Gill, scholarly Roger Fry, Gordon Craig, dynamic Wyndham Lewis, Count Harry Kessler, and kindred figures of note in the galaxy of contemporary British and Continental art, letters, science, and social life.

Augustus John, baggy checked suit and earrings, poor and unappreciated during the early meager years, was yet supercharged with creative vitality and enthusiasm. Whilst Steer and Tonks in carpet slippers, so to say, were "strolling unconcerned through the pêle-mêle of life," John, forced to teach for a modest dole at Liverpool, exclaims, "I pant to do a superb decoration. The three days I prostitute to foul faced commodity weigh on my soul terribly." Yet the pinch of poverty was keenly present for, he adds, "I would paint any man a nice big picture for £50 if he paid down £25 first." But alas, no one bit!

Sir William, it appears, does not flit across Channel to France quite so frequently as was the case during his prentice days. Instead, he goes oftener to Germany, and whilst in Berlin pays his re-

Transient

By DON MARQUIS

GIVE up the dream that Love may trick the fates
To live again somewhere beyond the gleam
Of dying stars, or shatter the strong gates
Some god has builded high: give up the dream.

Flame were not flame unless it met the dark—
The beauty of our doomed, bewildered loves
Dwells in the transience of the moving spark
Which pricks oblivion's blackness as it moves;
A few more heartbeats and our hearts shall lie
Dusty and done with raptures and with rhyme:
Let us not babble of eternity
Who stand upon this little edge of time!
Even old godheads sink in space and drown,
Their arks like foundered galleons sucked down.

spects to the mighty yet diminutive Adolf von Menzel, whom he finds in a spacious, untidy studio at the top of several long flights of stairs. Speaking of his own scrupulously wrought work, Menzel remarked, "Well, I early cultivated the habit of drawing things as though I were never to see them again." As simple and profound an instance of artistic probity as one might anywhere encounter. Albeit Exzellenz and punctiliously saluted by the palace guard, the octagenarian painter, if a minute late for lunch, would find himself barred from the dining-room by his sister, a veritable *alte Heze!* Liebermann was also visited, and whereas the trenchant cosmopolitan Professor Max grudgingly admitted Sargent as being of some artistic consequence he would have none of Whistler whose vaunted estheticism he curtly characterized as "Cotten-Geschmack."

Back in England again, one cannot fail to note the contrast offered by the picture of Conrad living in bitter, gnawing poverty at Pent Farm, Kent, a prey to the torturing twinges of gout and the perpetual struggle to find *le most juste*. ("I can't get anything out of myself quickly," writes Conrad to his artist friend, "it takes me a year of agony to make something like a book—generally longer. And, my dear fellow, when it is done there are not more than twenty people who understand *pourquoi on se tue pour écrire quelques phrases pas trop mauvaises*.")

From time to time cropped to the surface the mellow, resigned physiognomies of certain eminent Victorians, such as Leslie Stephen, and Lord Morley, who on one occasion sagely drops the remark that "a man can do a deal of good in the world if he doesn't mind who gets the credit for it." One also catches a glimpse of Stopford Brooke who, though nearing eighty, with that wholesome, verdant optimism so characteristically British, is seen building for himself down in Surrey a large, spacious house and planting a rose garden. Main interest, however, is focussed upon closer associates and actual contemporaries. Hudson, whose portrait was painted in his hideously unesthetic Church Row abode, is described as possessing a "peculiar, mysterious charm quite indescribable; something about him tore at one's heart, so lovable he was. Yet he never invited affection; he was a lonely man, with something of the animal about him, walking away and returning with the nonchalance of an animal, and then disappearing again."

Yet not all are sketched with such sympathetic apperception. Bernard Shaw, grown important and pontifical, and preferring to be painted "in the style of Holbein" by Sir John Collier, and actually being limned by Neville Lytton in the robes of a Pope looking for all the world like Innocent X. in the Doria picture, is by subtle inference reduced to something approximating his true proportions. Rodin, who had twice been to London, appeared to be the not unwilling victim of much overadulation, and Anatole France was more justly noted for his urbanity and naughtiness than for his humanity of spirit. "The gold of Whistler's halo is already wearing thin," it seems, and Cézanne, "like Whistler, was a great amateur, and like Whistler he proved that it is far better to be an inspired amateur than an uninspired professional." The gem of these snap-shot aperçus is, however, reserved for Picasso, "that sad esthetic rake, who spends each week-end with a different style," the veritable "gigolo of geometry."

Despite such strictures actual or implied, Sir William does not set his back obstinately against the moderns and the modern movement. Like his great predecessors, Goya and Daumier, he is distinctly of his own time. Those august brahmins, the "scholar-esthetes" of Florence, Berenson et al., leave him cold and refreshingly unimpressed, living as they do amidst the princely things of a bygone age "which, for all their beauty, seemed as misplaced as an enamelled and be-wigged mistress in the house of a young man." And as for the museums, they are "golden cages for stuffed birds," already "vast as public cemeteries," each addi-

tion becoming "more costly, more wearying and confusing to the visitor, and a further encouragement to restlessness and haste where peace and leisure are needed."

Eschewing the Academy and faithful to his coterie of the New English Art Club, Sir William yet seems a bit dubious concerning the destiny of British Art until the coming of the Great War and the inspiring showing made by the British and Canadian artists at the front. Here, indeed, an art hitherto sluggish of pace, uncertain of direction, and steeped in the slush of national sentimentality, suddenly becomes a vivid, living organism, instinct with emotion, imagination, courageous grasp of actuality and, above all, a definite, specific mission. Dapper Orpen, John now a bearded major in trench helmet, serious-browed Kennington, cocksure Nevinson, and gunner Roberts,



SIR WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN.
(From a sketch by Alpheus Cole.)

hitherto unregarded, suddenly sprung under the stress of action to their full artistic stature. And Sir William himself frankly acknowledges that "no work has ever satisfied me so completely as that which I undertook while acting as a British, and later, a Canadian, Official Artist." All of which proves that the practice of art entails a liberal measure of emotivity. As fancy-rich Chagall once said, "In art it is better to feel first and think afterward."

With all its brilliant, scintillant, and essentially sophisticated surface, "Men and Memories" remains in spirit warm and replete with genuine artistic and cultural contacts. It possesses the indispensable ingredient of *Gefühl*. And that is not the least reason why as a portrait of its time, whether in pen, pencil, or brush, its place seems assured.

Bookbuyer's Complaint

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least urged everyone to buy every book as if he were going to keep it forever. Now if I want "Arabia Deserta" or Willa Cather's last novel, or Elinor Wylie's "Poems," or the life of Disraeli, or a history of the war, or an anthology of the best modern plays, or MacLeish's "Conquistador," or the poems of A. E. Housman, or "The Dictionary of American Biography," or Lytton Strachey's "Queen Victoria," the question is not of price, provided that it is reasonable in consideration of the paper and format. The only question is how soon shall I be able to afford to make my purchases. Two dollars and a half, or seven dollars and a half, is a good investment when one considers a possible twenty years of life on my own bookshelves.

But if the books offered me are detective stories to be read on Monday, if they are books (no matter how good) on what Russia seemed to be like between May and October of 1931—and is certainly not like now, or readable but ephemeral novels, or biographies of political candidates,

or studies of the current economic situation, or examples of the hundred and one other kinds of book publication, good for now, wanted now, readable now, but worthless in six months or a year, then price is a factor, then I am willing to pay a larger sum than for a magazine because I am getting something more substantial, more durable, more lendable, more unified in its interest,—but not too much larger. Then I want good typography and a decent make-up, but binding, and even paper, is relatively of no great importance. I want a book, but a book not too dear to discard when I and my friends have finished it.

Is it impossible for the publishing trade to meet this divergence in readers' wants? It exists; it has become urgent with the coming of hard times; failure to note it has undoubtedly been one of the causes for the sharp decline in the sale of books. Pressure to pay the price of a shelf for any book, has confused, and perhaps angered, the buyer. He sees short-lived books in the remainder stands at a quarter of their price on issue shortly before, and concludes that all books are too high. He sees on his shelves books bought high, read for their news, and already dead, and determines to buy no more books for a while. His instinct is both to read and to collect books, but if he must pay as much for news of the month as for durable literature, that instinct is thwarted.

We ask, as readers, therefore, that books to be read but not kept, should be cheaper, cheaply bound on cheaper paper, cheaply distributed, but with the best typography, with publisher's advertising, or any advertising in them, if desired, to help keep down costs. We ask also that our expensive books, for which we are quite willing to pay, books destined for the library shelves, should be books with at least some expectation of long life in them. The distinction cannot always be made successfully, and there will be numerous errors (correctible however) on first publication, but a general distinction is possible. This is one way to loosen the purse strings of the potentially immense book-buying population of the United States.

A Frenchman's China

CHINA. By MARC CHADOURNE. Illustrated by MIGUEL COVARRUBIAS. New York: Covici-Friede. 1932. \$3.

Reviewed by LUCILLE DOUGLAS

THE Great Wall of China is alive. For M. Chadourne, the Great Wall is sympolic. From the first moment he saw it, it was for him the sign spiritual of this great country.

"It seemed sprung from the stony desert itself. It rushed off to the assault of a bare mountain and embraced it like the tentacles of an octopus. The thorny thrust of this great horny spine, whose saw-toothed battlements appeared to brush the sky, created an indescribable impression of life, belligerency, and, at the same time, of fabulous strength. Farther on, one could see it encircle a precipice, slide to the bottom of a ravine, and disappear. Elsewhere it reemerged from a sharp ridge and the fragment reared against the sky brought to mind the waving, arched neck of a wild beast, a gigantic saurian coming forth from its lair, raging and fuming. Once again, despite its banality, the metaphor of the dragon forced itself upon me. A dragon drawing all its sustenance from the breast of this prehistoric landscape. . . ."

This is the wall that the Emperor Shi Hwang-ti built more than two thousand years ago. Not only, and this is important to remember, to protect his subjects from marauders, but to enlarge the boundaries of the Flowery Kingdom. That spirit holds today. In spite of the breaches in the wall, in spite of the many invasions, a tide that beats and washes against it, but does not destroy—Huns, Tartars, Mongols, Arabs, Turks, to be followed by the Venetians, the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, the English, the French,—the spirit of the Great Wall holds, so M. Chadourne finds.

"The Chinese Wall is alive. Each Chinese builds it within and about himself. It explains and illustrates China. It is at once her spirit and her history, her pro-

tective organism and growth, the living symbol of her offensive and defensive strategy, of her struggle inch by inch against the Occident. . . . To fortify the wall against the West, it is necessary to take from the West all that it can give, to profit by all it can teach and then turn its weapons against it. . . . It is the entire Oriental-Occidental drama in Asia. Can China defend herself?"

This is the thought that he followed throughout his extensive journeys in China, in his discussions of the revolution, the civil wars, the communistic bogey, Young China, foreign imperialism, the two great China rackets, opium and kidnaping; through the great cities of Hongkong, Shanghai, and Peiping, up the Yangtze to Chiangking and beyond, across the rice fields, into the labyrinthine thoroughfares of the teeming life that is everywhere, in spite of famine and pestilence—the building of a wall against the foreigner. His thought is judicially analytical. He is not concerned so much with the solution of the problems as with the influences that have brought about the prevailing conditions and the results of the impact of foreign countries. He carefully evaluates the events of the thousands of years that make China the great force it is today, a vast disorganized horde of people, a country in a chaotic state that would appal any other civilization, but which is held together by an inward serenity that will be difficult to conquer by force.

In the final chapter, which is an addition to the European edition, M. Chadourne considers China and Japan and their relation to the Western powers in the light of the recent events. He says that everything makes them opposites (China and Japan) and that it is impossible to



RALPH HODGSON, POET
(From a Drawing by Sir William Rothenstein.)

conceive two natures more contrary. "The one ferments and boils, the other contracts and compresses itself to the point of explosion. China incarnates smiling chaos, prosperous disorder, wars in slippers, farcical governments, progress swallowed up, for better or worse, by traditions; Japan signifies discipline, constraint, traditions engulfed by progress, the fierce conquest of the Occidental order engendering the worst crises. Even in its colics the Chinese paunch takes its ease and slowly digests; Japan suffers from an eternal stomach cramp, not to speak of her nervous fits and sick headaches. Smile at a Celestial and he swoons, speak to a Japanese and he strangles." Yet, there are those people who say, "Let them fight it out, they are the same race!"

For this book on China, Marc Chadourne, the well-known French novelist, was awarded the *Prix Gringoire* in 1931. In 1930 his book, "Cecile de la Folie," won for him the *Prix Femina*. He writes with precision and discrimination. Possessed of a brilliant style, he is also gifted with a clarity of vision and an unusual penetration of the hidden forces which are shaping the destiny of modern China. Such insight is rarely given to a foreigner, but he sees from the vantage point of wide experience gained from extensive travels on the five continents. A keen observer, he has chosen both geographically and humanly the salient characteristics