

## BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### A Geologist's View

**SONS OF THE EARTH.** By KIRTLLEY F. MATHER. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1930. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HOMER P. LITTLE  
Clark University

THIS is a brief, readable account of the story of the evolution of man. It is that and more, for the story of man and his immediate ancestors is preceded by the story of "the stream of life" which went before him and is followed by predictions as to his future. The author recognizes that he is on less certain footing in this last portion, yet rightly calls attention to what seem to be lessons which may be drawn from the long geologic past. A feature not often found in books of this type is a chapter on early man in America. Since all this is done in 263 pages of text, it is evident that the treatment must be decidedly cursory. The facts, however, are carefully selected and progressively arranged, so that a well-connected whole is produced and the reader is left with exactly what the author professes to be striving to give—"the geologist's view of history."

There are eight chapters in all, and the best way to give an idea of the scope of the book is to name the chapters which, in order of sequence, are as follows: Mother Earth's Diary, The Stream of Life, The Family Tree of the Higher Vertebrates, Man's Ancestral Lineage, Artists of the Great Ice Age, The First Families of America, The Heritage from Mother Earth, and the Outlook for the Future. Technical terms are almost wholly avoided. In chapter one the author attempts to imbue the reader with the geologist's point of view towards the rocks which compose the earth's crust, the vicissitudes which they have undergone, and the life remains which they contain. This is a serious undertaking to encompass in thirty-two pages, but the reader will emerge with a clear understanding of at least two ideas necessary for a sympathetic reading of the balance of the book—first, that the geologist is justified in considering the earth very old—perhaps a billion years—and second, how fossils are preserved in the rocks. Chapters two, three, four, and seven are an assemblage of tidbits from the material usually presented in the historical portion of an introductory course in geology, and it is an unresponsive reader indeed who is not fascinated by them. To Mather they represent "The Stream of Life," to Lull the "Pulse of Life," and to Bradley "The Parade of the Living." In chapter five similar tidbits from the archeology of Europe and particularly of France are presented. In the short space of thirty-six pages the author gives a surprisingly comprehensive and yet clear and readable account of the facts and conclusions regarding the lineage, craftsmanship, and art of pre-historic man in Europe. Naturally, little space can be given to controverted points, but their presence is indicated to the intelligent reader by the free use of "if," "apparently," and "likely."

Chapter six, "The First Families of America," is a welcome inclusion since the subject of early man in America usually gets scant attention when the opportunity to present the more striking facts of Europe is open. The first half of the chapter is concerned with the story of the early civilizations of America and the evidence that "there is no reason for assigning to them any truly great antiquity." The latter half discusses the world migrations of man from the area of his evolution and the possible dates of his arrival in America. The conclusion from this theoretical study is that "the first families of America reached this continent thirty or forty thousand years ago, and *Homo sapiens* has dwelt in America nearly or quite as long as he has lived in western Europe." The final chapter attempts to foresee the probable future of mankind in the light of the long past. "Experience indicates that the trend of events persists from the known past into the predictable future." Certainly the geologist is entitled to have his fling as prophet and with better hope of success than many another prophet! The book closes with the optimistic note with which geologists are inclined to regard the future: "If they (mankind) face the next ten thousand years

with intelligence, courage, and high purpose, they will find the resources which they need and will become still more worthy scions of Mother Earth."

The attractiveness of the book is much enhanced by over eighty reproductions of pen and ink sketches which aid much in making unfamiliar facts real. The book is readable as to print and style, and sound as to statement. Many should enjoy it.

### A Gentle Soul

**SOMETHING BEYOND. A Life Story.** By A. F. WEBLING. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1931.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

THE very considerable interest of this book is derived mainly from the fact that its author was for many years intimately a part of the Anglo-Catholic movement in England. Ever since T. S. Eliot forsook the broad-backed hippopotamus for the True Church and lent the renown of his name to Anglo Catholicism, Americans have wondered what there could be in this movement to lead so lucid a thinker to join the pilgrimage toward Rome. If there is little in "Something Beyond" to enlighten them on this point—for Mr. Webling is no philosopher nor claims to be—there is a great deal in the book that will be news to many Americans. That within the Anglican communion there are churches that practice the mass and the confessional, with chapels consecrated to the worship of the Virgin and candles lighted to speed the souls of the departed on their way through purgatory, with members devoutly saying the Rosary and pastors preaching openly the doctrine of transubstantiation—such extreme tolerance is likely to seem strange, to our narrower cisatlantic minds. As Mr. Webling says, Anglo-Catholicism differs from Roman Catholicism in nothing save that it does not acknowledge the authority of the Pope. Why, having gone so far, one should stumble over this slight acknowledgement, Mr. Webling does not seek to explain; presumably the answer lies in the fact that Popes are never Englishmen. With that limitation at one end, and at the other a pronounced disapproval of avowed atheism, apparently almost any kind of belief can find shelter somewhere within the Church of England. To be sure, Mr. Webling's bishop thought that the doctrine of transubstantiation was taught a little too stridently and felt it necessary to discipline the offending rector—by declining to visit the church on his next pastoral round!

Mr. Webling was not himself this rector; he was a mere curate who had come to his curacy by the strange path of a twelve years' clerkship in a London grocery firm. With disarming modesty and simplicity, the author tells his story; how in his boyhood the family was brought low by the desertion of his father; how he was raised by relatives in the country and came to love the peace of English rural life, with its lanes and hedges, from which he was transplanted by financial necessity to the hated routine of a London office; and how a yearning for freedom, nothing else, led him to enter the Church because the educational requirements of the ministry were more easily surmounted than those of other professions. At least, so he would have us believe; but, as a kindlier or sweeter nature never looked out from the pages of a book, one may suspect that there were other motives which Mr. Webling's modesty will not permit him to emphasize. Then follows the long account of how he was converted to Anglo-Catholicism by the influence of his idealistic friend Hallam whose curate he became and how, when Hallam was succeeded by a religious pedant of the same persuasion, he discovered that he had loved the doctrines not for their own but Hallam's sake. A study for higher criticism showed him that Anglo-Catholic authoritarianism was itself without historical authority, and he left the movement.

His book concludes with what to many will seem a sad anti-climax; his acceptance, on what seems to him indubitable empirical evidence, of the spiritualistic claims of psychical research. It would, however, be an unfeeling critic who would begrudge the gentle soul of Mr. Webling the fresh draughts of consolation which he has found

even in those muddy springs. His whole book is a lesson in the old truth that it is the man and not the belief that matters; for, though his beliefs may all be tosh, one is left at the end knowing that it has been a privilege to meet the man.

### The University of Oxford

**THE GOVERNMENT OF OXFORD.** New York: Oxford University Press. 1931.

Reviewed by ABRAHAM FLEXNER  
Author of "Universities"

THIS little volume is in every respect a model performance. Dissatisfied with the results achieved at long intervals by Royal Commissions, a voluntary group of forward-looking college heads and dons have undertaken to describe the constitution of the University of Oxford and the complex inter-relations of the University and the Colleges, and gently to intimate the direction in which reform and growth might perhaps take place. In describing, the Committee raises certain far-reaching questions. Despite the complexity of the University's constitution and mode of operation, in essence the problem can be formulated in simple terms: Oxford began as a University; the colleges began as hostels. In the course of centuries, the Colleges have become autonomous teaching as well as residential institutions; the University has simultaneously decreased in scope, influence, and relative wealth. England will not and should not weaken or destroy the Colleges which educate the flower of the nation: how is it to develop the University as an effective institution for the promotion of learning and the education of larger numbers of men and women above even the high English collegiate level? The English, even the most intelligent and highly educated, possess an almost naïve belief that this is a question which will settle itself, that is, that any person desiring to advance further can somehow find the teacher or make the arrangements needed to help him. Perhaps the "organization" of the American graduate school has frightened Oxford and Cambridge, as well it might. But to the present reviewer two points seem plain: advanced studies will not adequately take care of themselves in England or anywhere else; the errors of the American graduate school can be corrected in America and by that same token can be avoided in Great Britain.

"The Government of Oxford" is obviously not limited in its suggestiveness and appeal to Oxonians or Cantabrigians; its substance ought to be carefully digested by those who in the United States have permitted American universities to become the chaotic things that they now are.

### The Institution of Comrades

**WHITMAN AND BURROUGHS, COMRADES.** By CLARA BARRUS. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1931.

Reviewed by RANDALL STEWART  
Yale University

THIS is, for the most part, a collection of documents with editorial comments appended by Dr. Barrus and by Mr. Clifton J. Furness, whose scholarly contributions would warrant, it seems, the inclusion of his name on the title page. These documents, many here published for the first time, are of various kinds: the Whitman-Burroughs correspondence, letters exchanged by Burroughs and numerous admirers and detractors of Whitman, and a large assortment of miscellaneous writings connected with the history of Whitman's reputation from 1860 to 1930.

Whitman was forty-four, Burroughs twenty-six, when they first met in 1863 in Washington, where Whitman was beginning his work in the war hospitals and Burroughs was a government clerk. Notwithstanding the disparity in their ages, a close friendship developed which continued with increasing mutual affection and without estrangement until Whitman's death in 1892—a concrete embodiment of the poet's "institution of the dear love of comrades." Having assumed at the beginning the role of militant champion of "Leaves of Grass" against all hostile critics, Burroughs con-

tinued to expound and defend the book until his death in 1921: a bibliographical appendix lists sixty-five titles which range from book reviews and articles for newspapers and magazines to the longer works, "Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person" (1867) and "Whitman: A Study" (1896). Closely allied with O'Connor Bucke, Kennedy, and other "Whitmanites," Burroughs, both in private letters and in published articles, poured volley on volley into the ranks of the enemy. Angered because Emerson had omitted Whitman from his "Parnassus," he was "determined to give Emerson a shot . . . a good raking down would do him good." After reading in the *New York Tribune* an article unfavorable to Whitman by Bayard Taylor, Burroughs wrote to Edward Dowden: "A scalping knife would feel better in my hand than a pen." Lowell, Howells, Curtis, Higginson, and other literary critics who were unsympathetic to Whitman were subjects of caustic comment by Burroughs. But Burroughs's ardor was tempered by an instinctive sanity and poise. It is this quality which distinguishes his writings on Whitman from those by O'Connor and the other "hot little prophets," and which makes his "Whitman: A Study" one of the most valuable books on its subject. In the heat of conflict, he approached the serenity of Whitman himself, who, when Swinburne's apostasy outraged all the members of Whitman's circle except Burroughs, could say with admirable catholicity: "Swinburne is not to be drummed out of all camps because he does not find himself comfortable in our camp."

One of the most interesting aspects of the personal relationship which forms the nucleus of this book is Burroughs's influence on Whitman in the composition of certain poems. Dr. Barrus and Mr. Furness cite several examples. "The Dalliance of the Eagles" owed its genesis to Burroughs's account of the mating of eagles. "With Husky, Haughty Lips, O Sea" grew out of a sojourn near the ocean in company with Burroughs. And in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," Whitman was indebted to his friend for one of his happiest inspirations—the hermit thrush.

The present work contains much material which does not bear directly on its central theme. One finds, to choose a few items at random, a patriotic defense of Secretary Harlan prepared by the Iowa Historical Society, an exposé of the methods of Anthony Comstock, the story of Whitman and Anne Gilchrist, an account of Whitman's public lectures, much interesting material on the reception of "Leaves of Grass" both in America and in England, some new evidence on the vexed question of Whitman's children. But despite this heterogeneity of materials, the title of the volume is really not a misnomer, so closely was Burroughs identified with the life of his friend and the fortunes of his friend's book.

Burroughs's devotion to Whitman was the greatest enthusiasm of his life. In "Accepting the Universe" (1920), Burroughs wrote: "I look upon Whitman as the greatest personality—not the greatest intellect, but the most symbolical man, the greatest incarnation of mind, heart, and soul, fused and fired by the poetic spirit—that has appeared in the world during the Christian era." The potency of Whitman's influence, however, did not destroy Burroughs's mental integrity. In "The Last Harvest" (1922), he said: "Whitman's indomitable faith [in immortality] I admire, but cannot share. My torch will not kindle at his flame." The individuality of the naturalist was not eclipsed by the cosmic genius of the poet. Indeed, the personality of Burroughs shines in these pages with a peculiar brightness.

"The discovery is said to have been made that puns are coming back into fashion," says the *Manchester Guardian*. "Puns, like roller-skating, seem to have their cycles, and there are always disbelievers, people who, like Carlyle with Charles Lamb, are generally bored by such a 'ghastly make-believe of wit.' Lamb certainly did his best for the pun, and Hazlitt was probably straining a point a little when he said that Lamb's efforts were to be imputed to humilitiy."

## BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### Inventing the Steamboat

JAMES RUMSEY, PIONEER OF STEAM NAVIGATION. By ELLA MAY TURNER. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House. 1930.

Reviewed by JOHN CORBIN

JAMES Rumsey and John Fitch waged a war of pamphlets, toward the end of the eighteenth century, as to which invented the steamboat, and their partisans have kept the dispute alive ever since. For it is known by all the knowing that Robert Fulton is as little entitled to that great distinction as his partner in the Hudson-Fulton celebration of two decades ago deserves the credit of discovering the river that bears his name. In her monograph on Rumsey, Miss Ella May Turner now presents the many documents in the case. She has found much new material in Washington's Letter Books, still largely unpublished, and more in the Washington Papers, which are mainly letters which he received and which are a mine, long neglected, of documents the most illuminating. She has searched the papers of Jefferson and Madison, and also private collections, here and abroad, which are as numerous as they are recondite. The modest subtitle of her volume is "Pioneer of Steam Navigation"; nowhere does she permit partisanship or special pleading to color her statement. But the case which she—or, rather, her documents—present for Rumsey is quite conclusive.

For Fitch it may be said that he hit upon the more feasible method of propulsion—the paddle wheels later used by Fulton in the *Clermont*. Rumsey got his power by pumping a jet of water out at the stern, a method involving much friction. But Fitch was no mechanic and had only the vaguest ideas as to the application of steam; his

engine was so big and heavy, and required so much fuel, that little or no room remained for passengers or freight. Rumsey appears to have been a mechanical inventor of the first order. Owing to his poverty, his first attempt had to be made with an old iron kettle for boiler, but he soon substituted "an entirely new invention," namely a "pipe boiler"—the first tubular boiler—made of a coil of tubes for water with the fire beneath. The saving of fuel Benjamin Rush estimated at seven-eighths and Franklin at nine-tenths, the saving in size and weight of the boiler being in proportion. Finally, Rumsey, as Washington recorded, was busy with his idea in November, 1784; and he made a highly successful trial on the Potomac before a crowd of witnesses in December, 1787, propelling a boat with many passengers for some hours at the rate of four miles an hour. Fitch's experiments were made in 1788 and 1789 and were so far from successful that, abandoning his paddles, he strongly advocated Rumsey's method of "forcing out a Column of Water abaft," varying this with the proposal of a jet of air.

After innumerable and heartbreaking trials Rumsey constructed a larger steamboat of over a hundred tons burden, which in 1792 made a successful trip on the English Thames at the rate of four knots an hour; but on the eve of his triumph he died of a stroke.

Fulton had the inestimable advantage of a wealthy and loyal patron and of a knowledge of the methods of Fitch and Rumsey. But after ten years' labor the speed he achieved, in 1803, was less than three miles an hour—as against Rumsey's four miles in 1787. The only credit to which Fulton is properly entitled is that of making the steamboat available commercially. Few

who read the documents Miss Turner has assembled will doubt that Rumsey was as capable of doing this, and in a much shorter time.

Rumsey's character was so vigorous and striking, his genius so original, and the task to which he addressed himself was of such vast historic importance, that one can only regret that Miss Turner has not oftener abandoned her strictly documentary method for critical interpretation both of the man and of his achievements. It was the lordly reaches of our navigable waterways that gave birth to the steamboat, together with the importance of a free play of commerce as promoting our national union, then in its earliest and most perilous stages. Rumsey's first patron was George Washington; and Washington's prime interest, as his diary of 1784 shows, was to prevent the secession of the region beyond the Alleghenies by binding it to the seaboard with the ties of commerce. As yet there was no question of steam. Rumsey did, indeed, suggest the possibility; but Washington dismissed it as being (as he later put it in one of his rarely felicitous phrases) "an ebullition of his genius." The boat then in question, as explained in the statements of both Washington and Rumsey, was of truly amazing originality. It used the downrush of the Potomac, working into the boat by paddle-wheels, to operate punting poles; these, by thrusting against the bottom, jabbed the craft and its load forward. Again and again Washington deposed that he had seen this boat operate, and on his hopes of it he largely based his efforts to make of the Potomac "a waterway wide and smooth" over the mountains to the Ohio.

Few personal histories are as appealing as that of this long-neglected inventor. He first emerges on the Potomac as "Crazy Rumsey." Generously befriended by the two leading characters of the new Republic, and by prominent men abroad, he struggled tirelessly against the lack of mechanical resources in both countries, and against the marked coldness of the inventor of the condensing steam-engine, James Watt. The best solder he could get melted in spots, which had to be stopped as best they could with rag bandages. Backers backed the wrong way, and he had to flee the bailiff and the debtors' prison. During his absence, careless mechanics allowed his precious engine to rust inside. On the eve of his great trial on the Thames, an autocratic ignoramus forced him to leave a safe mooring and anchor in the stream. When the tide subsided, *The Columbian Maid* sank on the upturned fluke of an anchor and had her bottom stove in: the precious machinery lay submerged and rusting for days. And then, when success and financial succor seemed certain, came the stroke of death. Miss Turner is much concerned with the question of marble monuments. Rumsey's true fame is that of the most brilliant pioneer of the steamboat, and of the commercial development which alone, quite as Washington foresaw, could safeguard the new Republic against disunion.

Owen D. Young is "a most artful and attractive propagandist." Gifford Pinchot "has been at all times a supreme showman, sometimes sincere, but always unstable."

The one Presidential possibility who stands out among his fellows like a giant among pygmies is—Newton D. Baker. Take it from Mr.—or Messrs.—Anonymous. He is humble and honest. He is practical, even hard-boiled, yet he says of himself: "I am a dreamer of dreams." How does it come that, in a mirror which makes everybody else look like a clown or a villain or both, Mr. Baker has the appearance of a decent citizen? It is a mystery, and the mystery is the deeper in that Mr. Baker, even as reflected in a friendly mirror, has said and done things which, if said and done by any of the others in the procession, would have made them look like thirty cents. If the exceptional treatment accorded the Ohioan had been given to the rest, the result would have been both a more interesting and more trustworthy book. For if the jacket is ludicrously mistaken in saying that it treats its illustrious subjects or victims "with the detachment of history," it is well within the truth in adding, "and the disparagement of contemporary personal journalism."

How far that disparagement is carried may be illustrated by the close of the chapter on Senator Morrow, which relates an anecdote that is declared to "furnish some clew to the conflicting chapters of his career and character." The anecdote is one said to be told by Mr. Morrow himself. A Scotsman was unable to find his railroad ticket. When it was discovered between his lips, his friends poked fun at him for his droll absent-mindedness. "You damn fools," he replied, "I was sucking off the date." Just what "clew to the conflicting chapters" of Mr. Morrow's career and character does this moral tale furnish? Does it reveal an irresistible tendency to "beat" his way through life? Or is there any point in the telling it at all?

There are palpable hits in the various chapters, there is alliterative epigram of a sort, and there are a few good stories, but the edge of the whole thing is dulled by the tone of almost uniform disparagement. The net effect is that of mud throwing rather than cool appraisal, but the obvious aim of the author is to score a *succès de scandale*, for which, however, he lacked material. Some of his reasoning is absurd, being based upon non-existent "facts." Thus he thinks that life has been unkind to Mr. Hoover. "It gave him easy and excessive wealth too early. Had he mingled with the gang, and learned to fight, he might be a more effective figure." Shades of the Stanford University campus! On the other hand, when he says that Gifford Pinchot "issues statements to the press which are almost as ungrammatical as Mr. Hoover's," he scores doubly. The book is a mixture of knowledge, insight, cheap cleverness, cynical claptrap, and literary facility. It would amuse and shock more often if it did not try to do both continually.

Allan Monkhouse, writing in the *Manchester Guardian*, states:

"A writer in the *Publisher and Bookseller* says: 'It must be agreed that there has never been a time, at any rate for many decades, when dissatisfaction with reviewing was so general.' I don't believe it, so it isn't agreed. There is always, of course, a good deal of dissatisfaction with reviewing, mainly because there are so many bad books written by people who want to be praised. There seems to be a notion that the fate of a new book is settled at London literary parties, where reprehensible arrangements are made between authors and reviewers. Well, this kind of thing is always said, and doubtless there is a little of what is called logrolling. . . . Of course there are seedy people on the fringes of every trade or profession, but I can affirm with confidence that spiteful or venal reviews of books, in decent papers and periodicals are very rare; as an author I have suffered a good deal from reviewers in my time, but out of many hundred reviews I could hardly point to one that I should qualify with such adjectives."



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### Distorted Reflections

THE MIRRORS OF 1932. Anonymous. With Cartoons by Cesare. New York: Brewer, Warren & Putnam. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ROYAL J. DAVIS

ALL the Presidential possibilities for next year are even worse than you had thought—all except one. Herbert Hoover is "fretful and feeble." Moreover, his reading is "wholly disorganized. One week he devours all discoverable data on Egyptian pyramids, and the next he studies the history of a forgotten tribe of African head-hunters." Alfred E. Smith has been spoiled by high life. He "has grown fat, physically and intellectually." Calvin Coolidge "was quite without civic conscience." What he seems to be unmentionable. Franklin D. Roosevelt "is not dependable." He is a "political cavorter." Dwight W. Morrow is "a curious and contemplative fellow rather than a doer." Joseph T. Robinson's "keenest lack is purpose and originality." Albert C. Ritchie is "the apostle of the primitive."