

THIS, THAT, AND THE OTHER

Sex Education

THE HOW AND WHY OF LIFE. By EMMA WHEAT GILLMORE. New York: Horace Liveright. 1932. \$2.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M.D.

IF you know your biology you will read this book with wondering respect; wonder, that it has been possible to boil down such a vast amount of scientific material to so compact a residue—respect, that in the process there is no hint of the common dishonesty of "popular" presentation.

If biology is a closed book to you, you may be deceived by its seeming simplicity. For Dr. Gillmore has treated the wide range of her subject with an artful ingenuousness which gives no hint to the unknowing of the years of study demanded of her before she was satisfied that she had selected precisely those facts best fitted to illustrate her story. And how extraordinarily well she has chosen!

Written in the form of a dialogue—sufficiently broken up by the story setting to avoid monotony—between a likable Everyboy, Bob, and his physician father, its aim is to correlate and complete the scattering bits of information about the origin of life and the relation of the sexes picked up by the average child by the time he has reached the early teens. It is frank, free from sentimentality—the two rarest of all qualities in books of like ambition—untechnical, and scientifically honest. The illustrations are adequate, those by the twelve-year old Michael Smith delightfully spirited. Surely there is something of Thurber in the Dressed Fowl on page 74.

And yet with not a single flaw to pick, and despite the evidence of English Michael Smith's astonishing zeal (he gave up his summer vacation for the fun of the illustrating), I remain a little skeptical as to its power to accomplish for the average American child what its author (and all of us in fact) supremely desire—namely the shifting of the child's natural interest in sex from the subjective to the objective sphere.

The normal child's interest in sex is personal, sporadic, and usually fleeting. By the time he has entered his teens he has managed to learn somehow the answer to the main questions which have nagged him. Enlightened parents and educators, alive at last to the fact that in the *somehow* lies the danger—that damage may result from both his unrequited curiosity and his distortion of facts, have been eager for some years to provide for him that sense of the universality of biological laws which would seem to be the best solvent of his conflicts. From this honest desire arose the more or less feverish dissertations on pollen-carrying bees and birds' eggs which a decade or so ago harassed the lives of parents and children alike, and which have afforded so much opportunity for ribald and probably justifiable lampooning. Countless children must have felt with Bob that "All this stuff doesn't register in one place." And here is where Dr. Gillmore enters.

Dr. Gillmore stoops to no suggestive rationalization. For her biological laws need no apology. She says in effect: Here is an exciting region of facts—facts of the How and Why of Life. You need not peek through the keyhole. With me you may enter boldly and unashamed. And starting with Bob's mother's twins, she proceeds through the mouthpiece of his father to open up before the boy's eager mind the world of monkeys, horses, dogs, even worms and insects, their remote past furnishing the romantic background for her story. At the end of less than two hundred pages, Bob, having learned a surprising amount about evolution, the laws of heredity, the natural order behind all mating, is led to a wholly logical, yet sufficiently idealistic conception of his moral and spiritual responsibilities. Which is all very much to the good.

That there are boys and girls who will gladly accept the author's invitation I hope to believe. That they will be the ones who need it least, those whose fathers are most like Bob's, I actively fear. The blame, if blame there be, rests not with

Dr. Gillmore, but with the boys and girls themselves, or rather with our pre-teen training.

I admit to a fear that youth's protest against informative books, admired and so hopefully offered by their elders, together with the fact that so few beyond the early grades have been led to any lively interest in the unhuman drama, may perforce limit its audience among the young. My hope is that it will come to the hands of countless parents and teachers, who will find in it not only a suggestive guide, but useful and interesting information.

When all is said and done, such sex education as is necessary for a child's freedom of spirits should come quite casually and by word of mouth from a sensible, understanding grown-up. Beyond this the wider the child's horizon can be extended, through correlated knowledge of the life about him, the greater his chances for a happy, conflict-free life. One feels assured that Bob's conversation with his father will contribute far more to his future marital happiness than all the Freud and Jung he may read when he goes up to the university. One ponders wistfully that there should be so few fathers like Bob's. It is with the hope that these may increase in numbers that I urge Dr. Gillmore's book to the serious attention of all parents.

phernalia, H. J. Webb's own shop in Old Street, and the magical abodes of Pollock and Skelt. There is a whole appendix of the publishers of toy theatre prints. There is the narrative of Robert Louis Stevenson's famous quarrel with Webb, Stevenson who of all writers vividly appreciated the toy theatre, a fact of which we are so forcibly reminded in his well known essay. Here is a representation of the characteristic cardboard thespian, right leg well outstretched, left leg bent, brilliant costume and ready knife and horse-pistol! One lingers over Pollock's orchestra strip, the stirring tableaux, the dance of the fairies, "Sir Lilliput Cardboard with Drawn Sword," West's characters, Green's early sheet, the fact that William Blake no less was one of the toy theatre's early designers. One revels in the feats of Aladdin and of Timour the Tartar!

As is pointed out in this large-paged volume of so many delights, it was the preparation for the toy theatre performance that was the chief joy of the young operative. Toy theatre figures are so divinely static in attitude that one cannot possibly imbue them with the liveliness of marionettes. Threads stick in the slots or tin stands turn over. The acting is stiff and wobbly in the extreme. But the anticipation of the great event is what makes



CHILDREN AND THEIR GOVERNESS—A WATERCOLOR.
From "American Folk Art" (Norton).

The Juvenile Drama

PENNY PLAIN, TWOPENCE COLOURED. By A. E. WILSON. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1933.

ONE of the fascinations of our youth was a toy theatre, wherein, we remember, were cardboard puppets representing the characters in that famous Gilbert and Sullivan opera, "The Mikado." They were stiff and glazed and were operated by vertical wires fastened in their backs. Then there was a friend of ours who possessed a proper grooved stage across which his toy figures staggered twitched by strings. He had that famous old toy theatre play, "The Miller and His Men," and gorgeous sheets of scenery color-printed in Germany. A few years ago we found for our own children such a toy theatre as is described in the enchanting book before us, imported by the Bookshop for Girls and Boys in Boston.

Mr. Wilson has undertaken to write the first really comprehensive history of the toy theatre in England, though he disclaims any comprehensiveness for it. His elaborated sketch of the juvenile drama bears a foreword by the famous English producer, Charles B. Cochran, and is embellished with eighty-three illustrations, many in color. Here are Webb's scenes from "The Miller and His Men." Here is the story of the principal shops that furnished the toy theatres and their para-

the imagination of childhood pyrotechnical!

Perhaps the children of today have more or less eschewed the toy theatre. If so, it seems a pity. Toy theatres can still be procured. Ingenuity can do a great deal with them. We have always wished we could look upon the toy theatre that Gilbert K. Chesterton is rumored to have built for himself and to operate, doubtless, with the most startling effects. In our old age, which approaches, we think we shall retire and do nothing but play with a toy theatre. We can then, at last, indulge in the fun of playwriting, without any of the grief, and become a producer at very little expense. Even if we have no audience it will not much matter!

The Oxford University Press has in preparation a volume containing, so far as it is known to exist, the complete correspondence between Swift and his close friend Charles Ford, edited by Professor D. Nichol Smith. There are fifty-one of these letters from Swift, ranging in date from 1708 to 1737. Most of them have remained in private hands since Ford's death, and all but one are now published for the first time. The volume will contain, in addition, letters to Ford from Gay, Pope, and Bolingbroke, and poems from Swift's holograph of Ford's transcript containing some important variants.

In Labrador

TRUE NORTH. By ELLIOTT MERRICK. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by DAINES BARRINGTON

THIS is a well written book, the narrative of the unpretentious journey of Mr. and Mrs. Merrick over the trap lines with Labrador trappers who were none too anxious to have the responsibility for amateurs.

It is not an adventure story in the sense that it has an escape from death per chapter. It is, instead, the impression that an "outside" man gets of the people and the country. The physical record is there, but it is spiced with the author's own observations, some of them delightfully apt.

Mr. Merrick shows the trappers (mostly Eskimo-Scotch) to be gluttons for work, shrewd in their own field, hospitable, decidedly respectful toward God and their own superstitions generally. They are able to tell by the prints of snow shoes which man has preceded them, but the story of the Russian Revolution is too unreal for their comprehension. They believe in heaven because "the Bible says you shouldn't work on Sunday and that's true, so heaven must be a real place." Their ideas of Sabbath work are nicely gauged. They may, for instance, shoot an animal in a trap, but they may not take it out. They spin yarns about what has happened to men who dared defy this Biblical edict. There is a certain flexibility, too. Some skin and scrape furs on Sundays, while others spoil their luck that way. To dream of polar bears means impending danger—which makes them more alert and, sure enough, something always happens that, without the warning of the dream, would have meant disaster.

"True North" is a useful book. Not since Stefansson's "The Friendly Arctic" have we read anything that so combines an interesting narrative with a practical handbook. The author himself probably did not regard his volume in the latter light, for he provides no index, but his day-by-day experiences and routine were so new to him that he set them all down. We learn, when he himself happened to discover it, what sleeping equipment is best, what food is easiest to prepare and most sustaining, what to use on sled runners to make the hauling lighter, what fancy "sportman's accessories" can cause trouble, and so on.

Mr. Merrick has read the books of previous travelers and residents—Lowe, McLean, Wallace, Hubbard, Bryant, Cabot. Strangely he fails to mention the great Labrador classic, Cartwright, and, tantalizingly, not a word of Grenfell beyond the bare statement that his wife was a Grenfell nurse and that both of them had worked at the Mission for two years. Is it because the International Grenfell Association, to his mind, is vulgarizing a primitive land and people that are primarily his escape from urban noise and pretension?

Their reading and apprenticeship with the trappers saved the Merricks from the incredibly unnecessary Labrador hardships of Leonidas Hubbard and Dillon Wallace. Their winter journey of 600 miles was in consequence hard without hardships. They liked the life because they were fitted for it, as Hubbard and Wallace were not, by reading, experience, and temperament.

The London Observer, says apropos of a special page published by the Nottingham Journal, "to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the day on which a certain J. M. Barrie joined its staff: It was not always so proud of him: it is on record that the foreman printer openly described his articles as tripe. The young man from Thrums had contracted to write twelve columns a week—five leaders, a column of gossip, and book reviews, all of which was carefully measured with a tape, to ensure that he was earning his salary of £3 a week. He left, like Oliver, because he asked for more. It was a useful experience, but he cannot have enjoyed writing leaders about Bradlaugh and General Gordon."

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

Biography

DISCOVERY. Being the Second Book of an Autobiography. By JOHN DRINKWATER. Houghton Mifflin. 1933. \$3.

The volume covers the fourteen years of Mr. Drinkwater's career from sixteen to thirty, and the four chief interests of it are symbolized on the cover pages by four designs indicating business, sport, poetry, and drama. For ten years he was an insurance clerk in Nottingham, Birmingham, and Manchester. In the first five years there was no suggestion of poetry or drama or anything except more or less successful drudgery, and some football and cricket. He was competent at both business and sport, but these were years that he regrets not having spent at a university. At twenty-one he suddenly discovered that the attempt to compose poetry gave him an extraordinary emotional experience. He discovered poetry as suddenly as Henry Adams, at about the same age in Berlin, "suddenly discovered that he was following a symphony of Beethoven" and that it meant something. In each young man "the new sense burst like a flower and bewildered him as he watched it," this subterranean cache of inflammable esthetic blazing up in a moment. Up to that moment Mr. Drinkwater had not even read any poetry to speak of, and the verse he wrote for some years he thinks had no other value than the experience it gave him. During the five years following he also met with the drama by way of amateur theatricals. "A more commonplace existence than mine between the ages of sixteen and twenty-six could not be devised." At twenty-seven he was feeling that what he had done meant nothing to him, but he had become vaguely aware of faculties and hopes.

His father was an actor, only moderately successful, and had planted him in insurance in order to insure his separation from the precarious life of the theatre. But in Birmingham he fell in with Barry Jackson, whose enthusiasm for the stage was liberally backed by a very wealthy father. Out of this combination developed a non-professional company, the Pilgrim Players, and eventually the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Insurance was abandoned. The remaining three years of the fourteen were rich in experience and satisfaction. He wrote and published poetry and won recognition; became General Manager of the Repertory Theatre, and began "forming friendships with many men who were becoming leaders of my generation." The Repertory Theatre was built in 1912 and the opening night was February 15th, 1913.

Fiction

THE MEMOIRS OF SATAN. By WILLIAM GERHARDT and BRIAN LUNN. Doubleday, Doran. 1933. \$2.50.

This is a laborious burlesque outline of history, supposedly written by Satan.

Satan begins with his earliest recollections, in heaven, when he is not sure whether or not he is one of the sons of God, and he is sometimes conscious of a vague discontent, because God is often cold to him; that is all that is made of the opportunity of the revolt among the angels. God gives Satan the earth to manage, even before life appears on it, and Satan (who is by the way complete from the first with hooves), becomes the ancestor of the human race several times over, for by yielding to the seductions of a she-ape he ensures that race the primacy in evolution; later it is he who is the father of Cain, and at the time of the Flood he renews the human race again. As time goes on he learns to possess humans, and thus inhabits Nero, Sir Tristram, and many other figures of history and romance. The book follows down the course of history, making heavy-handed alterations in the accepted version.

It is impossible to describe it except in a series of negatives. It is not in the least philosophic, as Anatole France's similar books are; its only pretension to philosophy is in its suggestion, which belongs back in the days of Robert Ingersoll, that the Biblical patriarchs did not always behave well. It is not witty. It is not good slap-stick farce; and, though it seems to try hard enough, it is not even very dirty. The pleasantest part of it is the close, which announces the death of Satan; so we shall have no further memoirs, at least. "Courage, tout le monde!" as the soldier says in "The Cloister and the Hearth," "le diable est mort!"

MISS DELICIA. By MARY JOHNSTON. Little, Brown. 1933. \$2.50.

The story is told of Miss Delicia Allen, who was born in 1834 on the Indian Leap plantation in Tidewater, Virginia, how she grew to womanhood amid her family and her family's friends; how she went to England and there met Clement Aylmer the poet, and knew love for a few days before they parted forever, for Clement was already married; how Delicia returned to a South on the verge of war and emerged from it a woman with the potentialities for another love, as deep as the one that had escaped her.

That is the story and it should provide food for unfruitful speculation, for the reader will find it difficult to understand how an author could so completely have failed to breathe life into her characters; how, despite an occasionally graceful style and urbane intellect she could have set down a series of scenes that seem to have taken place in a vacuum—despite the possibilities for the exposition of human character in love, in war, in life and death. The gentlewomen of this book, and there are many of them, move through the pages, or rather stand inert upon each page, like plates from Godey's *Lady's Book*, for it is impossible to credit them with flesh and blood. The gentlemen speak

(Continued on next page)

Foreign Literature

Hauptmann at Seventy

DAS DRAMATISCHE WERK. By Gerhart Hauptmann. Berlin: S. Fischer. 2 vols.

GESPRÄCHE MIT GERHART HAUPTMANN. By JOSEPH CHAPIRO. Berlin: S. Fischer. 1932.

NEUE RUNDSCHAU. Hauptmann number. Berlin: S. Fischer. 1932.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

ON November 15th Hauptmann celebrated his seventieth birthday. The occasion was marked, both inside and outside Germany, by meetings and lectures, and in honor of the occasion a special two-volume edition of his plays, complete, down to the latest, "Vor Sonnenuntergang," which was reviewed here on September 24th last, has been published. If the official participation in the German celebrations was rather less spontaneous and enthusiastic than on the occasion of his jubilee ten years ago, this must be ascribed to the changed political and social conditions. In certain of his writings, in his early plays, in his epical satire "Till Eulenspiegel" which was published four or five years ago, Hauptmann has not concealed his antipathy to extreme nationalism and what he would call "reaction." Hence, it may be, a certain coolness, and, at the other extreme, the recent celebrations have been marked by the Communists with denunciations of the dramatist's alleged betrayal of the workers. No doubt all this, both coolness and denunciation, leave Hauptmann unmoved; he can at least rest assured that by all serious students of modern German literature, both in Germany and abroad, he is regarded as the most important dramatist of his generation, with a worldwide reputation which only Bernard Shaw could challenge.

Although, as has just been mentioned, it is Hauptmann's dramatic work that has recently been reissued as part of the celebrations, it is not only—even if it is chiefly—by his plays that his name will live. Since the war he has published six plays—all of which have been duly reviewed in the columns of this *Review*—but he has also published three novels, two long poems, and two short stories, as well as the long work in scarcely-concealed autobiographical form, his "Buch der Leidenschaft." To the careful reader who troubles to make the necessary comparisons, most of Gerhart Hauptmann's work, even the dramatic, is highly self-revealing. He built up his plays on scenes he knew intimately, on characters with whom he was associated in real life, and the philosophy he put into his characters' mouths is often quite clearly a reflection of his own beliefs. But in the prose works the connection between life and art is even more evident. His two exquisite short stories, "Die Spitzhacke" and "Die Hochzeit auf Buchenhorst," for example, are quite obviously derived from real incidents of his childhood and early manhood, and friendly reviewers in Germany, well acquainted with Hauptmann, were not slow to supply the requisite annotation. But of direct and avowed self-revelation there has been comparatively little. Hauptmann may well have spoken frequently behind the mask, but he has rarely discarded the mask, and given publicity to his course of life and his opinions or beliefs. This has been particularly so during the past ten years, and it is accordingly of exceptional interest at the moment to read such a book as Joseph Chapiro's "Gespräche mit Hauptmann." Here is the record of a series of conversations conducted with the dramatist over the past ten years and now published with his express approval. Herr Chapiro is no Eckermann, and some of his chapters are slight and hardly superior to an afternoon's effort by a newspaper interviewer. But others do go into deep questions of personal belief and manner of life, and they alone would make the book indispensable to any future biographer.

Hauptmann confesses to a dislike of systematic philosophy; one of his favorite writers is Pascal, whom he greatly prefers to Kant or Leibnitz or Spinoza, partly because of the *ad hoc* nature of his reflections, as one might say, because he expressed his beliefs in a short, clear form and did not formulate a ponderous system. Certainly there is no regular philosophy to be deduced from these "Conversations." Hauptmann reveals himself as an artist, deeply imbued with a sense of

the value of the plastic. We are reminded that he was, and is still, passionately devoted to the sculptor's art, and he remarks that he has always tried to build up each of his characters as an individual; he has no *Massenvorstellung* of mankind. He is thus remote—although he does not actually say so—from the proletarian art which was so much in vogue in his country soon after the war. He is also quite clearly, if not an anti-intellectualist, then at least a man who relies greatly on intuition and impression, and deliberately rejects the intellect as a preponderating factor in his work. Readers of "Hannele"—to mention only one, and that an early, work—have no need to be reminded that, although Hauptmann made his reputation first as an unflinching realist, there has always been a marked vein of mysticism in his writing. This finds ample confirmation in the confessions which Herr Chapiro has elicited. At various times during these conversations Hauptmann has spoken of himself as a fatalist, as an agnostic, as a man for whom the supreme question is Montaigne's "Que sais-je?" But he has no less insistently explained that he is an optimist, a believer in a better future for mankind, and a firm upholder of the doctrine of a future life. The way in which he explains this confidence is one of the longest and most interesting chapters in the book.

A generous, hopeful personality speaks to us in all these pages.



Some dark horses
that the Spring has
brought to light—

True North
by Elliott Merrick

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